LIFE AND LOYALTY

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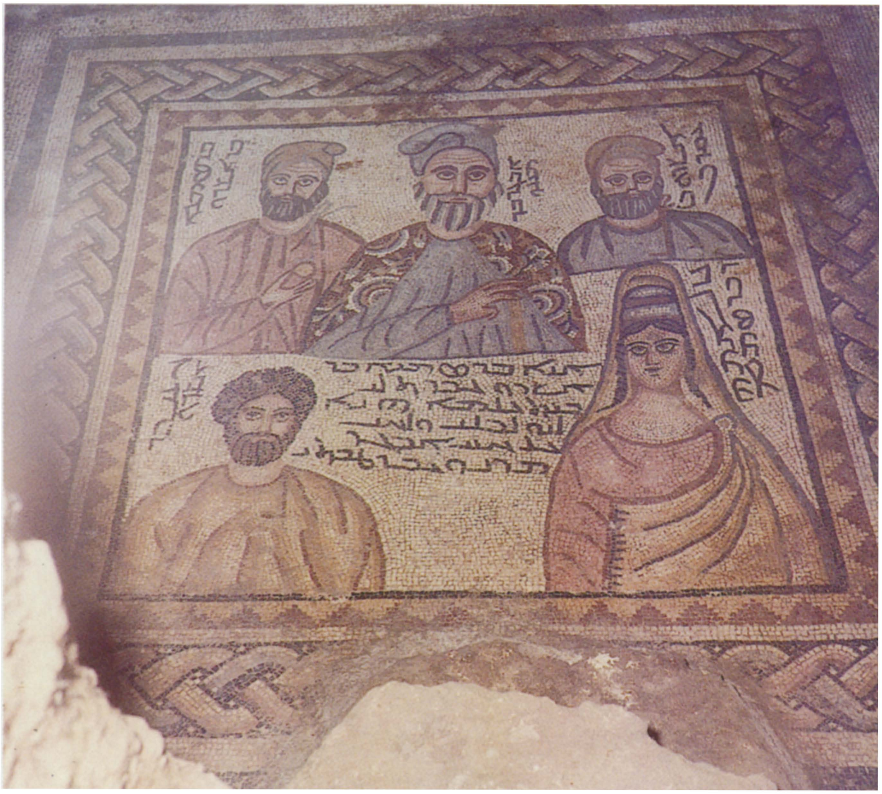

Eddessene tomb mosaic with a portrait of King Abgar the Great, from the beginning of the third century CE.

LIFE AND LOYALTY

A Study in the Socio-Religious Culture of Syria and Mesopotamia in the Graeco-Roman Period Based on Epigraphical Evidence

BY

KLAAS DIJKSTRA

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This series Religions in the Graeco-Roman World presents a forum for studies in the social and cultural function of religions in the Greek and the Roman world, dealing with pagan religions both in their own right and in their interaction with and influence on Christianity and Judaism during a lengthy period of fundamental change. Special attention will be given to the religious history of regions and cities which illustrate the practical workings of these processes.
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Foar Pake en Beppe, Heit en Mem

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PREFACE

Many years ago, during a tutorial on Aramaic epigraphy by Prof. dr H.J.W. Drijvers, the employment of the formula *ʿl ḥyy*, *for the life of*, in votive-inscriptions manifested itself as a most intriguing phenomenon. In our subsequent discussions the idea for the present inquiry took shape. Since then, the formula increasingly became a part of my life, culminating in a constant engagement with it for the past seven years. Thanks to a grant of the Foundation for Research in the field of Theology and the science of Religions in the Netherlands which is subsidized by the Netherlands Organisation for the Advancement of Research (NWO), I was able for some four years to investigate systematically the many riddles evoked by the formula, for which I am very grateful. Also, I thank the 'Stichting Zonneweelde' for an additional grant that enabled me to submit this manuscript as a thesis.

Most indebted I am to Prof. dr Drijvers, who first as a teacher stimulated my interest for ancient Near Eastern religions, and then as my promotor supported this research with critical comments as well as many valuable suggestions from his great expertise on Semitic languages and ancient Near Eastern cultures and religions. He, moreover, willingly supplied the illustration on the frontispiece. Most of all, though, I appreciate our friendship that developed through the years.

Also, I would like to acknowledge the late Prof. dr Th. P. van Baaren and Prof. dr H.G. Kippenberg who introduced me in the many-stranded realm of the science of religions. Undoubtedly, something of their approach of religion as a phenomenon is reflected by the present study.

In a few sessions Prof. dr H.S. Versnel was so kind to share with me some of his expert knowledge of Latin and Greek votive-inscriptions and, concomitantly, of religion in the Graeco-Roman period. For this and the resulting suggestions with regard to this inquiry, I owe him.

Furthermore, I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. dr E.C.D. Hunter of the Faculty of Oriental Studies of the University of Cambridge for reading the manuscript, correcting and improving the English, and her constructive criticism. Very grateful I am to Prof. dr S.L. Radt for verifying and, when necessary, correcting the Greek accentuation. Of course, any error or deficiency in both the English and the Greek should be attributed to the obstinacy or inattention of the author.

For their interest in the progress of my investigations and their support in all kinds of questions, but especially for the creative atmosphere that surrounds them and that they manage to keep up, I thank my colleagues at the Department of Languages and Cultures of the Middle East of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Groningen.

I am most grateful to Tj. de Vries for acquainting me with the editorial qualities of computer-programmes and for his help in editorial matters in general.

Finally, special thanks to Ellen, for reasons obvious to her, and our children, Jasper and Julia, who both born during the 'delivery' of this labour, have been a source of welcome distraction and inspiration.

Ezinge, September 1995 Klaas Dijkstra

ABBREVIATIONS

AAS	Annales Archéologiques de Syrie
ADAJ	Annual of the Department of Antiquites of Jordan
AION	Annali dell Istituto Orientale di Napoli
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt
AS	H. Seyrig, Antiquités Syriennes, in *Syria*; cited by the numbers or by the separate volumes of *Syria*
BAR	British Archaeological Reports
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BES	J. Teixidor, Bulletin d'Epigraphie Sémitique, in *Syria* from 1967 onwards
BSOAS	Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies
CIS	Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum
CRAI	Comptes Rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et belles lettres
DFD	J.T. Milik, *Dédicaces Faites par des Dieux (Palmyre, Hatra, Tyr) et des thiases sémitiques à l'époque romaine*, Paris 1972
DISO	C.-F. Jean-J. Hoftijzer, *Dictionnaire des Inscriptions Sémitiques de l'Ouest*, Leiden 1965
Dunant	C. Dunant, *Le sanctuaire de Baalshamin à Palmyre* III, Les inscriptions, Rome 1971
EPRO	Etudes Préliminaires aux Religions Orientales dans l'Empire Romain
ESE	Ephemeris für Semitische Epigraphik
Frye e.a.	R.N. Frye, J.F. Gilliam, H. Ingholt and C.B. Welles, *Inscriptions from Dura-Europos*, Yale Classical Studies XIV, 1955
HUCA	Hebrew Union Colledge Annual
IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal
IGLS	Inscriptions Grecques et Latines de la Syrie
Inv.	*Inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre*, I–IX, ed. J. Cantineau, Damascus-Beirut 1930–1939; X, ed. J. Starcky, Damascus 1949; XI, ed. J. Teixidor, Damascus-Beirut 1965; XII, eds. A. Bounni et J. Teixidor, Damascus 1975.
JANES	Journal of the American Near Eastern Society

JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JESHO	Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient
JJS	Journal of Jewish Studies
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JRS	Journal of Roman Studies
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies
KAI	H. Donner-W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften*, Wiesbaden 1962
MFP	M. Gawlikowski, *Monuments Funéraire de Palmyre*, Warszawa 1970
MUSJ	Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph
NESE	Neue Ephemeris für Semitische Epigraphik
PBSR	Papers of the British School at Rome
PEQ	Palestine Exploration Quarterly
PNO	D. Schlumberger, *La Palmyrène du Nord-ouest*, Paris 1951
RA	Revue Archéologique
RAC	Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum
RB	Revue Biblique
RES	Répertoire d'épigraphie Sémitique
RSP	M. Gawlikowski, *Recueil d'inscriptions palmyréniennes provenant de fouilles syriennes et polonaises à Palmyre*, Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres XVI, 1974
RTP	H. Ingholt, H. Seyrig, J. Starcky, *Recueil des Tessères de Palmyre*, Paris 1955
SEG	Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum
TEAD	*The Excavations At Dura-Europos conducted by Yale University and the French Academy of Inscriptions and Letters*, New Haven, Yale UP. Preliminary reports Vols. I–IX. Vols. I–II, eds. P.V.C. Bauer and M. Rostovtzeff 1929 and 1931; Vols. III–IV, eds. P.V.C. Bauer, M. Rostovtzeff and A.R. Bellinger 1932 and 1933; Vol. V, ed. M. Rostovtzeff 1934; Vol. VI, eds. M. Rostovtzeff et al. 1934; Vol. VII/VII, eds. M. Rostovtzeff, F.E. Brown and C.B. Welles 1939; Vol. IX, eds. M. Rostovtzeff et al. 1944.
WO	Welt des Orients
ZDMG	Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft
ZPE	Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

A HABIT OF DEDICATING

In the course of the present century, excavations carried out in cities in and around the Syrian-Mesopotamian steppe, such as Palmyra and Hatra, have yielded a great number of Aramaic inscriptions containing the formula *ʿl ḥyy, for the life of.* Except for the slightly older Nabataean ones, the majority date back to the first three centuries AD. They belong to (parts of) buildings which have religious or public functions such as temples, as well as to altars, statues and reliefs that were erected in such buildings, and, therefore, shared in their religious or public intent. As a rule, object and inscription are intimately linked with each other and since many objects are explicitly dedicated to a deity, a religious intent is more often than not obvious. According to the highly stereotyped text, the dedicator has *offered*, *erected*, *bestowed*, or *made* the object in question (for a particular deity) *for the life of* one or more beneficiaries, among whom the dedicator usually, but never exclusively, lists himself. In the greater number of the inscriptions, the other beneficiaries are related to the dedicator in terms of kinship, e.g. *his sons*, *his brothers*, or *his house*. The use of proper names to indicate the beneficiaries is relatively rare in these instances. Apparently their ties of kinship with the dedicator are more important than their individuality.

The following example from the temple of Baalshamin in Palmyra is representative of this category of inscriptions. It is inscribed in two lines on the lintel of a portico (Dunant 1971: 14):

> *mṭltʾ dh klh ʿmwdyh wšryth wtṭlylh qrb yrḥy br lšmš br rʿy dy mn bny mʿzyn lbʿlšmn ʾlhʾ*
> *ṭbʾ wškrʾ ʿl ḥywhy wḥyy bnwhy wʾḥwhy byrḥ ʾlwl šnt 378*
>
> *Translation:* This entire portico, its columns and its lintel and its roof, has offered Yarhay, son of Lishamsh, son of Raay, who belongs to the Beni Maazin, to Baalshamin, the good and

> rewarding god, for the life of himself and the life of his sons and his brothers. In the month Elul of the year 378 (= 67 AD).

In a minority of inscriptions, the beneficiaries are indicated as *kings* or otherwise defined as persons of high rank and dignity. These specifications are always in apposition to their proper names. Incidentally, the use of a pronominal suffix, as in *mry wʿbd ṭbty*, *my lord and benefactor* (Drijvers 1982a: 164), suggests an intimate relationship between dedicator and beneficiary in which the former is somehow dependent on the latter, without them being linked by ties of kinship. The following example, in eight lines inscribed on the socle of a statue found in one of the *iwans* of the main sanctuary in Hatra, is representative of this group of inscriptions (Degen 1970: 228).[1]

> H223
> *ṣlmʾ [d]y ʾprhṭ*
> *rbytʾ dy ʿrb*
> *dʾqym lh ʿqbʾ*
> *rbytʾ dbrmryn br*
> *šmšy rbytʾ ʿl*
> *ḥyʾ ʿbdsmyʾ*
> *mlkʾ mrh wʿl ḥyʾ*
> *bnyhy*
>
> *Translation:* The statue of Aphrahat, the major-domo of Arab, that has erected for him Aqba, the major-domo of Barmaren, son of Shamshy, the major-domo, for the life of Abdsimia, the king, his patron, and for the life of his (i.e. Abdsimia's) sons.

In a number of inscriptions, which in every other respect yield the same characteristics as the ones just cited, the formula *lḥyy* occurs as an alternative to *ʿl ḥyy*.[2] Since there is no significant difference in meaning of the Aramaic prepositions *l* and *ʿl* in this context, the former is merely a variant of the latter (Rosenthal 1974: 34ff).[3]

The Aramaic formula continues a well-established ancient Near

---

[1] Cf. for the indication of Hatrene inscriptions: Chapter 4, note 1.

[2] Cf. CIS II: 114, 4014, 4061; *Inv*. XI: 6, 19, 28, 34a; Naveh (1966: 34); Frye e.a. (1955: 138); Beyer and Livingstone (1987: 286); Beyer and Livingstone (1990: 2).

[3] Cf. Payne Smith (1903: 232 and 413); Koehler and Baumgartner (1958: 1088 and 1107); DISO (130 and 208).

Eastern tradition. Although it does not have our special attention here, it should be noted that the Assyrian formula *ana balaṭ*, *for the life of*, not only corresponds to the Aramaic *ʿl ḥyy* as regards its meaning, but also is similarly applied. Like its Aramaic counterpart, it is a constituent part of inscriptions attached to dedications to a deity. It moreover brings about or testifies to a relationship between the dedicator and one or more beneficiaries. It even appears that the use of the formula for dedication purposes extends back well into Old-Assyrian times (Deller 1983: 13).

Of more immediate concern are contemporary Greek equivalents to the formula. Bilingual inscriptions from Palmyra render Aramaic *ʿl ḥyy* into Greek either as ὑπὲρ ὑγιείας (CIS II: 3998 and 4003) or as ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας (Gawlikowski 1973: 92). In addition, many dedications originating from sites in areas adjacent to the Syrian-Mesopotamian steppe, especially cities nearer to the Mediterranean like Heliopolis-Baalbek and Apamea, but also Dura-Europos, bear Greek inscriptions containing these equivalents. Generally, they offer the same characteristics as those with an Aramaic inscription. However, many of them list the Roman Emperor or members of the Roman imperial family as the only or the most conspicuous beneficiaries.[4] Accordingly, it may be assumed that they played a part in the Emperor-cult, that ranged throughout the Roman Empire from the times of Augustus onwards (Price 1984: 1f). Similar dedications with Latin inscriptions provide the formula *pro salute* as an equivalent to ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας and ὑπὲρ ὑγιείας. In this perspective, the Aramaic formula appears as a local or regional manifestation of a wide-spread phenomenon.

The examples above show that the formula *ʿl ḥyy* qualifies the act of the dedicator. This holds true for equivalent formulae too. Dictionaries of the different languages abound in definitions with positive connotations for the entries *ḥy* (Koehler and Baumgartner 1958: 1075; DISO: 86f; Payne Smith 1903: 138f) or *ḥyym* (Koehler and Baumgartner 1958: 294), *balaṭu* (von Soden 1965: 98f), σωτηρία and ὑγίεια (Liddell and Scott 1879: 1751 and 1841f) and *salus* (Lewis and Short 1843: 1621ff) including *life*, *well-being*, *safety*, *health*, *soundness* (of body as well as mind), *welfare*, *happiness*, *prosperity*, *preservation* and *deliverance*. What other grounds, then, the dedicator may have for his act, he seizes the opportunity to present, or to establish, or to reinforce his relationship with the beneficiaries. Thus, the social context bears on the meaning of the dedicator's act as well as on the function of the dedication. However, the way in which it affects this meaning depends on the nature of the relationship between the parties and on the role religion plays. Consequently, a deeper understanding of the socio-religious functions which these dedications perform may be obtained by examining the patterns of relationship between the dedicator(s) and beneficiaries, combined with a review of the intents inherent to the phenomenon of dedicating.

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[4] *IGLS*: 1346 (Apamea); *IGLS*: 2711, 2712, 2713, 2714, 2715, 2716, 2717, 2723, 2727, 2744, 2745 (Baalbek); *IGLS*: 2964, 2966 (Gdita); *TEAD* I (42), *TEAD* V (226), *TEAD* VII/VIII (85) (Dura-Europos); Seyrig (1939: 303) (Hierapolis); Parker and McDermott (1978: 61) (Qaṣr el Uweinid).

Inevitably, such an analysis is rooted in the study of the history of religions and socio-cultural patterns in Syria-Mesopotamia in the first three centuries AD. Although considerable efforts have been made to reconstruct temples and to interpret iconographical data, as well as to establish the exact reading of the various inscriptions, much less attention has been paid to the socio-religious and cultural context from which these expressions derive their meaning. Some redress can be made by an examination of a particular category of inscriptions, wherein the relationship between a number of people, and one or more deities or sanctuaries is established. By clarifying the nature of these relationships and the way in which they operated as part of a dedication, our understanding of the interaction between the culture and religion of the ancient Near East might be augmented.

Definitions of culture and religion

Intrinsic to such an analysis are certain assumptions about the nature of the concepts of culture and religion, as well as about the relation between them and the way in which they manifest themselves in, and prove their utility to society. These assumptions have been inspired by the approach taken by the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz, who states: "Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (Geertz 1973a: 5). As culture reveals itself in human behaviour, which eventually is oriented at fellow-men, preferably ones that are able to rate it at its true value (social action), it is a public matter. And, as this symbolic action's need of meaning only can be satisfied within this social setting (the intersubjective world of common understandings), "analysis, then, is sorting out the structures of signification . . . and determining their social ground and import" (Geertz 1973a: 9). In this approach, culture and society are inextricably interwoven in that the members of a particular society are the bearers of a particular culture. Accordingly, Geertz (1973b: 89) defines 'culture' as: "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life". Being dynamic, this concept of culture takes into account the capriciousness of human life, and, therefore, the liability of the system to adaptation and modification, when necessary. It places the bearers of culture, and the unpredictable exigencies of life they have to cope with, at the heart of the definition, for in the end they are the ones that provide meaning. The need for adaptation or modification may result when different societies and cultures come in touch with each other; as when an ethnographer arrives at his place of destination to do field-work. Whilst acknowledging that cultural systems require a certain degree of coherence, the idea that they are independent entities which are in a position to determine or prescribe human conduct is challenged. Instead, cultural systems should be considered as a welcome recourse to which participants may turn or employ or manipulate to their advantage in *social discourse*, both within their own society as well as with members of other societies. As a result, "what the ethnographer is in fact faced with . . . is a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit, and which he must contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render" (Geertz 1973a: 10). Much of this statement applies to the historian and the historian of religion also. In Geertz's view religion is, like art, ideology, science, law, morality and common sense, a cultural system. Consequently, it partakes in the way a particular society or group conceptualizes the 'world'. As a pattern it is at once a model *of* and a model *for* 'reality'; it describes and shapes 'reality', whether social or otherwise, at one and the same time (Geertz 1973b: 93ff).[5]

This approach towards culture and religion is very similar to that adopted by French historians which is known as 'histoire des mentalités'. In order to render an adequate description of historical cultural and religious phenomena, one has to penetrate into the 'expérience vécu' of past societies and civilizations (Pleket 1973: 148). Individual religious or cultural expressions only make sense, if they are related to their wider conceptual environment, 'les mentalités collectives' (Dunand 1976: 485). They are part of the mental universe of a particular group or society and are indicative of how its members conceptualize and act upon the 'world'. As in the 'Geertzian' approach the concepts of religion and culture (as part of this mental universe) on the one hand, and society (as the association of bearers of this mental universe) on the other are intrinsically related to each other, for "seul a une existence l'homme inséré dans une société, à un niveau donné de développement économique, socio-politique, culturel, société dont il reflète plus ou moins fidèlement les croyances et les comportements" (Dunand 1976: 484).[6] This approach precludes the sociological theory of Durkheim, that culture (or religion) is merely a reflection of society.[7] Indeed, the concept of 'les mentalités collectives' corresponds with Geertz's concept of culture, so that the study of 'collective mentalities' aims at the understanding of historical contexts in a way very similar to Geertz's approach of exotic ones. Since 'les mentalités collectives' are only "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings", the historian's task is to render it as a comprehensible and coherent picture. The difficulties that cross the ethnographer's path hold for the historian and the historian of religion also, even when their field of study is the ancient Near East in classical times. The cultural and religious dimensions of society in this particular area at this particular moment in history may be conceived as "a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another". Such a conception accommodates the phenomenon of 'syncretism' that made many appearances throughout both this particular area and the Roman Empire at large, and that is understood best as the "poly-interpretable char-

---

[5] Another approach that considers religion as a function of culture is put forward in

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van Baaren and Drijvers (1973). For our purpose van Baaren (1973) and Drijvers (1973) are of special interest. Cf. also: Stolz (1988: 45ff).

[6] Cf. for an application of this approach: Versnel (1988, 1990 and 1992).

[7] Cf. Veyne (1986: 260). Although he observes certain analogies to exist in the structuring of society and people's attitude towards the Divine, Veyne insists that there is no causal connection whatsoever between them. It is noteworthy, that, as witnessed by his outstanding 'Bread and Circuses' (Veyne 1990), Veyne, like Geertz, owes much of his conceptual framework to Max Weber.

acter" of cultural and religious expressions (Drijvers 1980: 17). Each of the many different groups making up society writ at large, recognized the intentions and the referential qualities of such expressions and linked them with its own traditional conceptual structure. Functioning at two different levels of 'common understandings' at one and the same time, 'syncretism' is a very powerful binding-agent in society, because it facilitates mutual relationships.[8]

Syncretism in the Roman Near East: tribal factors

Interpreting another group's or another society's symbolic structures may allow for communication and thus for economic and other relations. In addition to military dominance, it may contribute to a firm hold on conquered groups, for it stimulates the demolition of ideological barriers. With this at the back of his mind but unaware of it, Caesar may have written about the religion of the Celts in his 'De bello Gallico' (Barié 1985: 63f). Likewise, it accounts for the highly praised tolerant attitude of Persians and Greeks as well as Parthians towards indigenous cults and practices once they had respectively established dominion in large parts of the Near East during the last half of the first millennium BC.[9]

When the Romans from the first century BC onwards managed to establish political and military control in the Near East, first in the Mediterranean coastal area and then in parts of the desert hinterland such as Palmyra, they entered into a many-stranded cultural and religious realm. In the course of centuries, if not millennia, all kinds of influences had met, had been interwoven with one another and had been put to a fruitful symbiosis, so as to make up a 'polyinterpretable' unity. To this, the Romans added their own cultural inheritance. Because of its location, the Near East, especially the area that nowadays comprises countries such as Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and the northern part of Saudi-Arabia, had for centuries been a meeting-point for a variety of cultural influences. In the second and first millenium BC it was traversed by Babylonians, Assyrians and Egyptians in order to settle their disputes. From the sixth century BC onwards, the Persians managed to establish a firm hold on it. At the end of the fourth century BC the Greeks under the command of Alexander the Great arrived at the scene. Subsequently, the Seleucids held sway on the vast territory of the western bank of river Euphrates until the take-over by the Romans. Since the Seleucids were not able to keep up dominance further East, they ceded to the Parthians. In a long process of expansion the latter pressed forward up the river Euphrates from the mid-third century BC onwards, but by the end of the first century BC, the river had more or less become the borderline between the Roman and Parthian super-powers. As relations between them were not hostile all the time, Parthian cultural and religious influences are distinguishable in northern Syria and northern Mesopotamia also.

---

[8] In contrast with Colledge (1986: 222), I do not restrict 'syncretism' to "the finding of correspondences between the deities of the Greek and Oriental pantheons". Before the Greeks arrived on the scene the phenomenon determined the cultural and religious climate of the ancient Near East already for centuries. Their appearance simply means, that, to all previous inheritances, another was added. A difference may be, that at the same time a similar process coloured relations between Romans and Greeks. The same applies to the Roman arrival in the area.

[9] Cf. for such an attitude with the Parthians: von Gall (1967: 287).

More than military expansion, however, trade was an important factor in the establishment of contacts, especially when it was of a regular nature. There are indications that, already in the second millennium BC, Assyrian families engaged in trade managed to man branch-offices at trading-posts elsewhere in the Near East on a permanent base (Silver 1985: 39ff). Similarly, Palmyrene merchant-families had standing delegations in cities such as Vologesias, an emporium situated upon river Euphrates somewhere half-way between Dura-Europos and Charax Spasinou. They moreover sailed the Ocean as far as the Indian peninsula near the Indus-delta (Gawlikowski 1988: 167; Seyrig 1936: 398). As a corollary to trade, cultural and religious concepts were dispersed throughout the regions.

The introduction of Aramaic as a *lingua franca* for administration purposes by the Persians throughout the territory occupied by them, made a great contribution to facilitating trade-relations, and in the wake of it the exchange of cultural and religious concepts (Colledge 1986: 222). When the Greeks took dominion, they introduced their language for the same purposes with the same side-effect. However, neither the Persians nor the Greeks made a great effort to suppress indigenous cultural and religious forms. As a result, the use of Aramaic subsisted well into Roman times, especially in the more or less independent and isolated regions of the Eastern Empire with cities like Palmyra and Edessa.

In addition to military, economic and political factors, an important explanatory element for 'syncretistic' tendencies is found in the very structure of ancient Near Eastern society. The application of recent anthropological research (Dyson-Hudson and Irons 1972; Nelson 1973; Salzman 1978) to all kinds of historical texts suggests that from time immemorial up to the present, Near Eastern society has consisted of three main components.[10] Each of them has its own interests and to some extent its own political and social structure (Gellner 1973: 2f). First of all, an urban component can be distinguished. Cities are important centers of political, administrative, commercial and religious activity. Secondly, rural villagers who are mainly engaged in agriculture. Finally, pastoral nomads who try to make a living of stock-breeding from flocks of goats and sheep.

It has been observed that there are various patterns of interaction between these components. Sometimes they are hostile, but usually peaceful. For example, in order to utilize and to protect natural resources as efficiently as possible, rural and nomadic groups often co-operate (Salzman 1972: 63ff; Swidler 1973: 23ff; Bates 1972: 48ff; de Geus 1983: 224). From such contacts marital bonds issue frequently (Pastner 1971: 178ff). Furthermore, autonomous nomadic groups may enter into relations with urban groups as auxiliaries for military and trading purposes. They are familiar with the area and, given the dangerous aspects of steppe-life, usually know how to handle their weapons. Also, they may be dependent on or related to urban groups, especially the élite (Asad 1973: 70f; Bates 1971: 121; Kister 1968: 164ff; Sartre 1982a: 121ff; Peters 1978: 324). For a city, taxation is a main incentive for maintaining relations with surrounding villages or rural agricultural groups (Briant 1973: 103ff; Briant 1982a: 149ff; Briant 1982b: 413ff; Hopwood 1986: 345ff). However, in some respects the distinction between city and countryside was perceived to be of minor importance or even not to exist at all in ancient times (Westermann 1949: 82ff). A city-dweller frequently earned his living on fields surrounding the city, either with pastoral or agricultural activities (Breebaart 1987: 11f).

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[10] Cf. Rowton (1973a); Rowton (1973b); Rowton (1974); Rowton (1976a); Prag (1985); Matthews (1978); Marfoe (1979). However, Gilbert (1975), very properly observes that the nomadic way of life is highly influenced by the capriciousness of wider environmental circumstances, especially ecological and political ones. Generally, they are beyond the capability of nomads to control. They only may hope to cope with them by applying various strategies of adaptation. Therefore, pressing the analogy between today's nomadism and the (pre)historical phenomenon should be avoided, for we are usually only very poorly informed about the wider environmental circumstances of the latter. Cf. also: Henninger (1959) and Henninger (1968).

In association with economic conditions, ecology has a deep influence on the stability of the different groups, especially the rural and nomadic ones (Barth 1964: 73ff; idem 1973: 16ff).[11] Poor conditions encourage individuals and sometimes even small groups to give up their nomadic way of life and to sedentarize, either in an urban or in a rural environment. As the autonomous nomadic state of life usually is more expensive than the rural, a great effort and investment is needed for a transition in the opposite direction (Barth 1964: 78f; Rowton 1974: 16ff; de Geus 1979: 15; Ehmann 1975: 124ff). Of course, if conditions permit it, individuals may join already existing nomadic groups. Another strategy for nomads to cope with set-backs is to take up arms and to move about marauding and plundering settlements and caravans (Rowton 1977: 193; Peters 1978: 316ff).

In many respects the nomadic component renders ancient Near Eastern society, particularly in steppe-regions, its unique character. Roaming the desert, autonomous nomadic groups at regular intervals come in touch with urban and rural groups. Obviously, an economic exchange is usually the main incentive for the ensuing interaction. Concomitantly, however, cultural and religious ideas may be shared. Although the spatial range of one such group may be limited, the existence of many of them moving about in all sorts of directions and recurrently interacting with each other and with urban or rural sedentaries at very different points, makes this component a very important, though perhaps slow, factor in the diffusion of cultural and religious concepts throughout the area (Henninger 1981: 47). In addition and contrast, sudden long-distance migration of a more permanent nature to regions nomadic groups normally do not visit, as epitomized by the movement of Arabs from the North of the Arabian peninsula to Syria and northern Mesopotamia at the end of the first millennium BC, has a more intense impact on the exchange of cultural concepts. After all, whether it manifests itself as hostile or indulgent, the permanent presence of intrusive groups has promptly to be dealt with by autochthonous groups so as to ensure and legitimate their own presence and existence. In one way or another, the newly-arisen situation has to be accounted for. A similar situation applies to the newcomers in the area. Since it is essential for both parties to arrive at some kind of co-existence, they, as a rule, enter into relations with each other. Inevitably, some form of interpreting one another's symbolic structures takes place, sometimes even to the extent of, first, the intermingling of the existing systems, and, then, the development of a communal system (Drijvers 1980: 17; Barié 1985: 63f). Something like this must have come to pass at the end of the first millenium BC in Syria and northern Mesopotamia. From then onwards Arab names and Arab deities abound in Aramaic inscriptions from this area (Drijvers 1980: 10ff; Colledge 1986: 222).

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[11] Although it deals mainly with circumstances in the Lebanese highlands and the Biqa valley in the Late Bronze period, Marfoe (1979) is an outstanding and fundamental article about the dynamics of ancient Near Eastern Society. Its interest ranges far beyond the spatial and temporal limits imposed on it. In relating ecological conditions to the limits of subsistence economy, Marfoe describes a number of strategies for coping with set-backs and problems inherent to such a situation. The elasticity of ties of kinship is an important factor here. It accounts for the formation and dissolution of, in borrowing a definition of, again, Geertz, "independently defined, specifically outlined traditional primordial groups" (Marfoe 1979: 1, 7). According to Marfoe this phenomenon is a major strategy. In addition, these primordial groups, which for that matter show a natural tendency to cohesion, function at different levels and in different spheres of society. Their presence or absence plays an important part in the formation of states. Thus, the decisive factor is not so much the territory occupied, but the people controlled (cf. also Mühlmann 1964: 251ff; Ehmann 1975: 57). These observations apply to nomads and sedentaries alike. As a matter of fact, Marfoe argues, this dichotomy of (ancient) Near Eastern society is to a high degree a mental construct. It may have some merit for the purpose of analysis—therefore it is applied here—, but nevertheless distorts 'reality'. However, since they originate from an urban perspective, the ancient sources generally allow for and reinforce such a perception (Shaw 1982–83: 5ff).

Hellenism in the Near East

The specific features of Near Eastern culture at the turn of the Era, usually indicated as 'Hellenistic', are the outcome of a similar process. Traditions and conceptions of Hellenic and Semitic stock collided (Teixidor 1981: 257f). However, due to the involvement of classical authors, we are far more informed about the process, even to the extent that it has considerably contorted our conception of the phenomenon (Teixidor 1981: 257). Hence, an assessment of 'Hellenistic culture' should take its point of departure in the various artistic and epigraphical expressions it has left us so as to avoid a 'Westernizing' bias.

Besides military superiority, there is not the slightest evidence that Greek cultural attainments were imposed upon the conquered (Millar 1987b: 113).[12] In fact as a phenomenon 'Hellenistic culture' is far more plausibly explained from the coalescence of many different cultural forms than from the 'Hellenization' of the area, which presupposes the existence of a colonizing programme on the part of the Greeks. On the contrary, Alexander the Great (356–323 BC), at whose instigation the whole process was after all initiated, favoured the coexistence of manifold cultural forms and expressions. There are no indications that his heirs substantially deviated from this policy. This is corroborated by Sartre's (1985b: 201) observation of a notable difference in the extent and progression of the use of Greek in urban centers on the one, and the rural environment on the other hand. Cities are inhabited by élites inclined to promote their own interests which more often than not coincide with those of the colonizer. Therefore, they tend to co-operate with the latter and to adopt his customs. By contrast, in a rural environment the colonizing presence and impact is far less pronounced. Greek, being the language for administrative purposes and public affairs, was only superficially rooted among the indigenous population from the countryside.[13] Cities, then, constituted focuses of learning and culture, Greek or otherwise, from which it radiated to the countryside (Peters 1983: 36).

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[12] A particular problem of 'hellenistic' Syria is "the relative scarcity of direct and

Peculiarities of segmentary society

In the steppe-regions of Syria and northern Mesopotamia 'Hellenistic culture' is characterized by a persistent Semitic under-current. Whilst cultures in a process of collision interact with each other, an additional explanatory element for this, may be found, once again, in the nomadic component of society. Since nomadic groups for the greater part of the year move about the desert on their own, without contacts with other groups, the chance of external incentives for change is reduced. As a result, they are rather conservative in a number of respects, such as social structure, culture and religion (Donner 1989: 78ff). Consequently, the role of nomads in ancient Near Eastern society is paradoxical. On the one hand, they are hardly liable to change; on the other, they are an important, though slow, factor in the diffusion of all kinds of concepts. Furthermore, the prominent presence of the

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contemporary evidence for any non-Greek culture" prior to Roman times (Millar 1987b: 131).

[13] Cf. also Teixidor (1981: 258) and MacAdam (1983: 106).

nomadic component accounts for the conspicuous adherence to, and utilization of, segmentary principles for structuring social relationships, viz. that both physical and social relationships are couched in terms of kinship. Because of their pastoral enterprise that can only sustain a limited amount of people, the size of nomadic groups is well-defined. As in daily life the members are entirely committed to each other—at least, when they are out in the desert—, such a group tends to be very cohesive (Fortes 1969: 123, 276ff; Marfoe 1979: 7ff). Ideologically this solidarity is related to, and idiomatically it is expressed in terms of kinship as 'sons' and 'brothers'—better 'brethren'—. That way, a number of rights and duties is regulated in terms of relationships in which they are conceived to reside naturally (Scheffler 1986; Fortes 1969: 127ff). Thus, it is important for someone to know who his 'brother' is, in order to define his place in society. To that end genealogies are indispensible. Indeed, the longer a person's genealogy, the more people he associates with him. A common feature of tribal or segmentary societies is that the end of an enterprise defines the 'depth' of a genealogy. On many an occasion this 'depth' is even culturally prescribed. However, since they are so crucial for structuring society, genealogies, in addition to such practical use, may serve to legitimate people's claims on scarce goods or aspired political positions, or even to enhance their social rank, for status may be derived from a renowned ancestor (Malamat 1968). All in all, the most conspicuous feature of tribal or segmentary society is the prominent presence of genealogies.[14]

There are strong indications that this tribal conception of human relationships retained its prominent position in cities like Palmyra, Hatra, Edessa and the cities of the former Nabataean Empire that were situated in or at the fringe of the steppe (Drijvers 1980: 17; Gawlikowski 1973: 26ff; Milik 1980a: 48ff; Millar 1987a: 151ff; Segal 1984: 90ff).[15] Tribal élites that gain power and prestige and that can rely on regular revenues tend to sedentarize in cities and to engage in politics (Rowton 1973b; Rowton 1974: 16ff; Rowton 1976a: 221ff; de Geus 1979: 15). Usually, however, their power-base, the tribes from which they spring and whose interests they are considered to promote, for the greater part adhere to a nomadic way of life. In due time, a decrease of the 'cohesive experience' takes place. Consequently, the élites are increasingly inclined to act like brokers bent on promoting their clients interests as long as they do not interfere with their own (Eisenstadt and Roniger 1984: 88ff, 168ff, 228ff; Ahmed 1973: 75ff). Nevertheless, contacts with the desert-dwellers as a rule remain vivid, with the result that the nomadic impact on urban life is considerable.[16] Therefore, they help to explain the persistence of kinship-terminology to denote social relationships in an urban environment.[17] The prominent position which urban-based tribal élites managed to demand for themselves in society, made them the appropriate bodies for the Romans to negotiate with, and, consequently, the means by which Roman power succeeded to ascertain itself (Wallace-Hadrill 1989b: 75ff). The members of the élites were gradually incorporated into the system of patronage that dominated, and, eventually, effectuated Roman rule. Under the Principate, the Emperor ranked as the outstanding patron from whom all patron-client bonds derived (Saller 1982: 41ff; Wallace-Hadrill 1982).

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[14] This paragraph is based on the works of Fox (1967); Fortes (1969); Peacock and Kirsch (1980: 60ff); Sigrist (1967: 45ff); Eickelman (1981: 105ff); Geertz (1979); Malamat (1962); Malamat (1967); Malamat (1973); Peters (1960); Henninger (1959); Henninger (1968); Robertson-Smith (1885).

[15] By contrast, in cities in the Mediterranean coastal area and in Asia Minor, the 'polis' as a social and referential concept gradually came to the fore (Pleket 1971a).

This is the overall context in which the social relationships expressed by the inscriptions have to be interpreted. It will be clear that, especially when the beneficiaries are related to the dedicator in terms of kinship, problems arise, for we have to decide whether the terminology is descriptive or classificatory (Brinkman 1977: 306). It is my contention that it is foremost descriptive and that it only has classificatory implications when the terms in question are qualified, as in *bny byth, the 'sons' of his house.* In presenting them in a ritual context by means of a dedication, the relationships are established or reinforced.

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[16] As observed by Rowton (1976b: 14ff; idem 1977: 187), the impact of structuring social relations along segmentary principles was so intense in this area that it even operated relationships between individuals who after having been outlawed for some reason gathered in remote spots to create a 'new' future, either in banditry or by means of more peaceful means as farming and husbandry. Frequently such groups took on as a proud self-designation the derisive names given to them for expressing contempt. As a group such outlaws very well might entertain relations with urban élites in much the same way as other tribal groups used to do (Hopwood 1986: 349ff; idem 1989: 175ff).

[17] Although it does not directly affect our presentation of Near Eastern society, Kippenberg (1986) observes a shift in the objects of orientation and identification in the Roman Empire during the second and third centuries AD under the influence of oriental cultural and social concepts. To the detriment of 'polis' as the paramount concept for structuring social relationships, 'oikos', though stripped of its traditional prerequisites as kinship and coresidence, but nevertheless adhering to connotations as affection and mutual responsibility,

The dynamics of dedications

Now, it is not so much the context as the role of the dedication that is in need of elucidation. Religion held a prominent place in all spheres of human activity and, therefore, was a public matter to a high degree. Cultural expressions and manifestations were never issued, unless some religious setting was provided. Thrilling and spectacular events, like games, usually took place under divine wing. Formal social gatherings of whatever kind were felt to be properly held only under the patronage of a deity, who more often than not simultaneously acted as a host (MacMullen 1981: 40; Beaujeu 1978: 25f). Public life, then, centered on temples which attended to many private as well as public needs. Temples provided the space and opportunity for individuals to engage in all kinds of religious experiences and to maintain personal relations with the Divine. Certain sanctuaries had an almost 'international' reputation for healing or oracular practices.[18] The solemnity of temples and their sacred precincts was embraced to announce drastic changes in one's personal life, transitions from one stage of life to another or achievements in games or sports. Such announcements were often accompanied by votive-offerings, which usually represented in a visual manner one or more aspects of the particular event or otherwise rendered it tangible. In dedicating or consecrating something, the dedicator made the god(s) accessary to his luck or success and, sometimes, to his misfortune or failure. In direct line with this, though on a different level, is the assignment or transfer to temples of extraordinary and valuable objects, whether or not for display, which in some respects turned these sanctuaries into musea or even banks (MacMullen 1981: 32ff; Stambaugh 1978: 583ff; Veyne 1983). As a result, temples, which often were presented as votive-offerings themselves, were crowded with all sorts of votive objects, usually identified as such by accompanying inscriptions. In addition, independent votive-inscriptions reminded of, for example, perishable offerings. Furthermore, the public nature of the temple-precinct frequently invited institutional bodies, such as the city-council and cult-groups (*collegia*), as well as influential private persons to employ it as a

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gradually comes to the fore. Cf. for a similar interpretation of the role of oriental cultural and social concepts manifest in Christianity: Drijvers (1990).

[18] This impression is left by the reading of MacMullen (1981); van Straten (1981); idem (1983); Versnel (1981b); Burkert (1987); Lane Fox (1988).

center of pronouncement and announcement. Thus meritorious citizens or other persons who in one way or another had proven their loyalty or favour to them might be honoured. Generally, such an honorific expression, whether underscored with a statue of the person in question or not, was couched in terms that meant to draw divine attention to the honoured. A recommendation to the gods, then, was conceived to be a proper way of bestowing someone with public honours for the place where it was put to notice was simply the paramount public space to be found.

In describing these features of 'Paganism in the Roman Empire', two major approaches can be discerned. The first, taking its point of departure in the individual religious expressions, ends in presenting it as 'votive religion'. Burkert takes the various dedications for so many private expressions of personal faith and assumes them to result normally from a vow: "The practice of vows can be seen as a major human strategy for coping with the future" (Burkert 1987: 13).[19] To press his point Burkert refers to the many votive-offerings that were set up on the occasions of seafaring and healing from illness. Most of them are of a conditional character, whose inscriptions indicate that they were put up as the accomplishment of a bargain with the gods.[20] In his anxiety, the dedicator turns to the god(s) for help to some specific end, and, if the god(s) grant(s) his request, he makes a special, but well circumscribed renunciation. The fulfillment of the vow in turn, is an exhortation to the god(s) to perpetuate their favour towards the dedicator: *da ut dem* (Burkert 1987: 13). In short: "votive objects, however humble, are documents of a personal faith in one specific god, who in turn gives some form of salvation: *soteria*" (Burkert 1987: 14).

Although some of Burkert's observations apply to the dedications made *for the life of*, a certain amount of reserve should be exercised as well. First of all, because it is precisely this rather vague formula that is presented as motivating the act of dedication, whereas the reasons in the examples Burkert refers to, seafaring and healing from illness, are far more explicit. Secondly, formulae as *ex voto* or *votum*

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[19] Burkert's position should not be mistaken for the regular interpretation of votive-offerings among historians of Greek and Roman religion. Cf. for a more balanced picture: Versnel (1981a).

[20] Cf. Lucianus (1921: 157): "They (i.e. the gods, KD) sell men their blessings, and one can buy from them health . . .".

solvit libens or κατ' εὐχήν, indicating indeed that these dedications should be considered as accomplishing so many vows, abound in Burkert's examples. Except for one category, viz. the innumerable small altars dedicated to the 'Anonymous God' in Palmyra, such explicative phraseology is absent from the inscriptions employing the Aramaic formula *ʿl ḥyy*. This particular Palmyrene class of inscriptions states that *this altar was made in expressing gratitude*, or that *this altar was made as an expression of gratitude*.[21] Although this Aramaic phrase bears resemblance to the Latin and Greek formulae, it should not be conceived as an Aramaic equivalent. In contrast with these, it does not necessarily entail that the dedications in question accomplish so many vows. A sense of gratitude may originate in many different religious experiences and is not restricted to the fulfilment of vows. It is interesting, though, that a few times an object is dedicated with a Greek inscription employing ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας, an equivalent of Aramaic *ʿl ḥyy*, whereas simultaneously it is suggested that it proceeds from a vow, κατ' εὐχήν. Likewise, it is interesting that in other inscriptions having a Latin or a Greek equivalent of Aramaic *ʿl ḥyy*, no equivalent of Palmyrene *mwdʾ*, *expressing gratitude*, is found (Hassani and Starcky 1953: 145ff). Finally, the beneficiaries of the dedications Burkert refers to usually are only the dedicators themselves. By contrast, the dedicators in *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions are generally included as beneficiaries, but they are never listed as the only ones.[22] In our case, the quest for personal motives of the dedicators, may occasionally be more satisfied by this other 'traditional' conception of dedications: *do ut des*, which stipulates some kind of gift from a deity in return for receiving one. Unlike Burkert's conception this has the advantage of unconditionally leaving the initiative with the dedicator.

Clearly, however, in the present case neither option presents a decisive solution to the problem. For the sake of the discussion, it might be useful to distinguish between votive-offerings in a general and ex-voto's in a strict sense.[23] The latter corresponds with Burkert's conception of the phenomenon as well as with most encyclopaedic entries on 'votum'.[24] The former designates the wider class of consecrations. Thus, *vota*—entailing request, granting of the request, renunciation—represent a specific species of consecrations. The conditional element for the dedication to ensue is prominently present (*dabo cum dederis*?).[25] In consecrations, by contrast, it may be completely absent. They simply serve to entertain a relationship with the Divine.

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[21] The Aramaic phrase *ʿbd wmwdʾ* consists of two verbal forms, connected with the copulativum: *ʿbd*: 3rd pers. sing. masc. peʿal of *ʿbd*, *to make*, and *mwdʾ*: part. sing. masc. abs. aphʿel of *ydy*, *to bear testimony*, *to acknowledge*, *to express gratitude*. Cf. DISO (104).

[22] Burkert (1987: 15) recognizes altruistic motives for vows, but considers them to be exceptional.

[23] I owe this suggestion to an oral communication of H.S. Versnel.

In the Aramaic inscriptions that have incited this study, there is no specification whatsoever concerning the status of the dedications except for the formula *ʿl ḥyy, for the life of.* If this is held to confer the status of ex-voto's in a strict sense to the dedication, then it has to be inferred that the dedicator previously made a vow, which has been granted by the divine addressee. The dedication settles the bargain or concludes the transaction whatever its initial intentions may have been. However, this is highly improbable, if it were only for the fact that in Greek and Latin inscriptions having an equivalent of the Aramaic formula such specifications do feature. Consequently, the formula labels the dedications as consecrations for which a wide range of explicit and implicit motives exist. If so, then the dedications foremost intend to affect future relations between dedicator and divine recipient and for that matter future relations between dedicator and beneficiaries. However, since all these alternatives spring from a common source, the precise course of events is only of minor importance for our purposes here.

Dedications within the context of Euergetism and Philotimia

In order to recover the dedicator's motives, then, the wording of the inscriptions is of little help. Since it is too general and too stereotyped, it simply conveys too little information on the subject for conclusions to be solidly founded. Therefore, personal religious motives of the dedicators may be assumed, but their true purport can only be surmised.[26] Rather the stereotyped wording suggests that, whatever the personal religious intentions of the dedicator, the dedication of an object to a particular deity is a matter of custom, implying good manners and culturally prescribed conduct as well as the application of certain standard formulae.[27] When it comes to determining the dedicator's motives, then, an inquiry for the wider cultural context of the dedications may prove itself to be more promising, especially if it is restricted to some relevant trends. Such an inquiry fully accords with the other major approach describing 'Paganism in the Roman Empire', which takes the various religious expressions as a whole, emphasizing their role in society and ends by characterizing paganism primarily as 'civic religion'.[28] It focuses attention on the intrinsic relationship between religion, politics and social structure within the framework of the ancient city as an independent entity. Practically guiding all human activity and effort, the city constituted a main frame

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[24] Cf. Turlan (1955); W. Eisenhut, 'Votum', in: Pauly's Realenzyklopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft, suppl. XIV, col. 964–973; D. Wachsmut, 'Weihungen', in: Der kleine Pauly V, 1975, col. 1355–1359; B. Kötting, 'Gelübde', in: *RAC* IX, col. 1055–1099.

[25] Another oral suggestion of H.S. Versnel.

[26] This observation applies to a wide range of votive offerings. Many inscriptions, indeed, do inform us on the status of the particular dedication with phrases like *ex-voto* or *votum solvit libens* or κατ' εὐχὴν, which classify it as the result of a vow. About the

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specific personal religious motives or anxieties inducing the vow in the first place, however, they usually fall silent.

[27] Cf. for a similar observation in respect of Greek formulae as ἀρετῆς καὶ εὐνοίας ἕνεκεν: Nachmanson (1911: 188).

[28] This approach is manifest, for example, in MacMullen (1981), Price (1984), Lane Fox (1988), and Veyne (1990). In view of the dynamics inherent in the 'poly-interpretable character' of cultural and religious expressions, the picture that Gordon (1990a; 1990b; 1990c) draws of Roman religion is rather misleading. Although he correctly assesses that since on the one hand Rome as the centre of the Empire gains politically in importance and, since on the other, as a result of the local élite's tendency to match the imperial élite's way-of-doing-things, priesthoods and local élite became more and more entwined during the Principate, this does not entail that, in the end, local cults and traditions vanished. The organization of local priesthoods according to imperial standards is one thing, the obliteration of indigenous traditions quite another. The point is, as amply demonstrated by Price (1984), that in these matters there is a subtle interplay between centre and periphery. Moreover, it is a truism that in the course of the Principate 'peripheral' influences increasingly affected the centre. Since members of the imperial élite were increasingly recruited from provincial élites (Halfmann 1979: 16ff; Eck 1980: 283ff), it is hard to maintain, as Gordon does, that 'civilization' spread from the centre.

A similar argument applies to the gap between 'élite' religion and 'popular' religion, as well as the absence of magical beliefs among the élite, perceived by Gordon. The organization of local priesthoods on a civic Graeco-Roman model, has no bearing whatsoever on the beliefs of the élites. Given the ritualistic essence of Roman religion (North 1976: 1ff) and the love for status and distinction among the élite, the higher echelons of Roman society may have perceived their religious practice as superior to that of 'commoners'. This refined taste, rather than a fundamental difference in belief, accounts for the élite's annoyance resulting from popular extravagance and excessive feasting under the pretence of religion (MacMullen 1974: 88ff; Patlagean 1977: 12ff; Heilmann 1985: 27ff). Gordon, however, leaves the impression as if the imperial élite very consciously, very systematically, and very rationally—in a modern, Western, scientific sense—contrived to promote their own material and political goals in abusing religion. In analyzing the undeniable intricate relationship of religion and politics in the Roman Empire, Price (1984) and Veyne (1990) present a much more balanced picture.

of reference (Finley 1977: 305; Quass 1982). Religion, however, provided the setting for all this so as to grant it a legitimate, legal, solemn or official status. Ancestral gods in particular were subject to lavish investments. Since their lot was perceived to be closely bound up with that of the city, inter-city rivalry not seldom manifested itself in a struggle of gods, or even in a struggle of different temples dedicated to one and the same god.[29] In addition, the proud presence of a temple for housing the Emperor-Cult ranked as an outstanding privilege for a city during the early Principate. Consequently, it too became a major topic in inter-city rivalry and many a great effort was undertaken for assuring such an imperial grant (Bowersock 1982: 173; Price 1984: 122ff). In trying to outdo each other in splendour and grandeur, cities sought to augment their prestige (Price 1984: 126ff). Hence, one of the main incentives governing public life in the Roman Empire is the assurance of status, usually indicated as *philotimia*. It manifests itself in a conspicuous love for display and in 'euergetism' (MacMullen 1964: 435ff; Pleket 1983: 173ff; Hopkins 1983c: 202; Wallace-Hadrill 1988: 45ff). As a matter of fact "it committed members of the upper class to a blatent competitiveness on all levels of social life" (Brown 1978: 31). In their craving to eternalize their names, the members of the élite tried to outdo each other on a civic level. Whether consciously or not, the competitive mentality incited them as a group to contest the élites of other cities. As a result, practically every city found itself engaged in prestigious building-programs. Temples multiplied, vying with each other in splendour, whilst inscriptions related the builder's name to the particular project. Obviously, their durability was conclusive to the purpose. However, other means were adopted also. Members of the élite courted the sympathy of their fellow-residents by assisting in moments of distress. They supplied food in times of shortage or extreme need. They financed embassies to the Emperor in order to assure city-privileges, or to rivalling cities in order to settle disputes. Furthermore, it was common practice for benefactors to sponsor games and all kinds of religious festivals (Hopkins 1983b: 7ff). In a manner similar to and in line with patronizing their clients, the members of the élite, on a different level and in a different situation, embraced every opportunity to promote their city's interests. In return, the city-council or, in keeping with the occasion, another institutional body honoured the benefactor with a statue or otherwise publicly expressed its gratitude.[30] Usually, such a memorial was accompanied by an inscription remembering the achievements of the benefactor so as to publicize his name and to keep it from oblivion (Schmitt-Pantel 1982: 179).

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[29] As manifest for example in the rivalling fame of 'Apollo of Claros' and 'Apollo of Didyma' (Lane Fox 1988: 168ff); cf. also MacMullen (1981: 105ff) and Sheppard (1984–86).

Throughout his outstanding analysis and description of 'euergetism' as a phenomenon, Veyne (1990) emphasizes the indiscriminate and liberal nature of benefits. In principle, a benefit is bestowed to a community whether there is a need for it or not, and irrespective of the means available to and the status of its individual members. Of course, at a time of distress a benefit has a greater impact than being bestowed merely for the sake of giving. On the other hand, Veyne observes, that, although the benefactor's behaviour is essentially liberal, the beneficiaries nevertheless expect him to act as he does, and sometimes even consider themselves entitled to a benefit, in much the same way as a company of celebrating friends demands a speech from the person to whose honour they have gathered. In order to function properly as a way of placing society's surplus collected in the hands of a happy few at the disposal of all its members in return for public esteem, a phenomenon as 'euergetism' needed the co-operation of all the actors involved. It certainly is to Veyne's merit that he contrives to picture the phenomenon as it appears in the Hellenistic and Roman world, as a complex of intrinsically interwoven psychological, ethical and sociological motives, which constitute an ideology broadly adhered to.

Clearly, the first move in an act of 'euergetism' is made by the benefactor. However, the phenomenon yields generally two categories of inscriptions: those conferring the benefit and those honouring the benefactor. The initiative for the latter is taken by the beneficiaries or persons representing them. They express gratitude and answer the demand of bestowing public honours to the benefactor as their part of the bargain. Formulae as τειμῆς χάριν and τειμῆς ἕνεκεν, or Aramaic *lyqr*, *in honour of*, seldom fail in motivating the erection of a statue or memorial. As a rule the first category accompanies the benefit. Its wording suggests, that it was improper for the benefactor to show his motives openly. Perhaps it was felt to speak of a lack of modesty if he did so. Instead, the benefactor assigned a divine destination, usually the gods associated with the city, to his donation. Many building-inscriptions support such a conception. According to Brown (1978: 35), it has to be understood that "the benefactor gave over wealth to the gods, who, as invisible and immortal, stood for all that could be shared by the community".[31] It is indeed in this category of inscriptions that the formula *ʿl ḥyy* and its equivalents abound. Obviously, the dedicator expects the splendour he conveys to the gods to be reflected by himself. Nevertheless, in conformity with dedicating the object to one or more divinities, this expectation is formulated in terms of 'health', 'welfare' or 'life' to be granted by the divine addressee as a return of the favour bestowed on him.

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[30] In the long run city-councils were not seldom faced with major difficulties as a result of bequests (Johnston 1985: 112ff).

However, not all dedications having an inscription with the formula stand out for their splendour or grandeur and their utility to the community. Again, the countless number of small altars dedicated to the 'Anonymous God' in Palmyra are an exception. In roughly half of them the formula occurs, whereas in the far greater part of the other half the tenor of the inscription suggests that it may be tacitly assumed, especially since the preposition *ʿl* is still present. Perhaps in preserving all its positive connotations, *for the life of* is simply shortened to *for* here. The question is, how are we to understand this category of dedications, for, surely, there is no incentive whatsoever for the dedicators to be hailed as benefactors. May be, they consider themselves as such and on that account entitled to public honours. If so, then a slight shift of the semantic value of the formula may be perceived. In contrast with the inscriptions mentioned earlier—although they are not entirely free from it either—, the conferment of a benefit and the concomitant privilege of public honours are expressed at one and the same time. In these instances, then, the meaning of *for the life of* moves in the direction of *in honour of* (Drijvers 1982a: 184).

A similar observation may apply to the erection of statues accompanied by inscriptions with the formula. This phenomenon features notably in Hatrene epigraphy, in which the formula *lyqr*, *in honour of*, except for one occasion, is strikingly absent.[32] Conspicuously, the beneficiaries in this category of inscriptions are never identical to the persons represented. The latter is honoured with his image, but the act of erecting is to the benefit of others. All this suggests that the semantic value of the formula is, at least partially, dependent on the wider, though still local, epigraphical context in which it is operative as well as on the object to which it is attached.[33]

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[31] Cf. also Veyne (1990: 86).

[32] Cf. H65 (Caquot 1955: 266).

Euergetism and Patronage

In spite of Veyne's explicit emphasis on the liberal and indiscriminate nature of 'euergetism', most of its characteristic features operate in patron-client bonds as well. Perhaps the main difference between a benefactor and a patron indeed is, that, generally, the first promotes the interests of an undifferentiated group of people, whereas the latter promotes the interests of individuals. As both 'euergetism' and 'patronage' prevail in descriptions of Roman society, and as they have so much in common, they probably originate from a common source. Whatever one's point of departure, they seamlessly fade into one another. How else are we to interpret Pliny's behaviour in bestowing benefits to his home-town of Comum? Is he acting as a patron or as a benefactor, or both? (Nicols 1980a: 379ff). As much as 'euergetism', then, 'patronage' determined the face of society in the Roman Empire. Although much disputed (d'Arms 1986), recent research in this field of study has demonstrated that it not only operates in individual relationships, but as a system governed public life on many different levels. As a model it served to conceptualize non-personal relations, such as, for example, the relation between Rome and its 'allies' (Rich 1989: 119ff).

As a personal relationship, "patronage is an asymmetrical friendship relation, involving: (1) a reciprocal exchange of goods and services, (2) a personal relationship of some duration, (3) two parties of unequal status offering different kinds of goods and services in exchange" (Johnson and Dandeker 1989: 224). In addition, many authors believe that the definition should be extended to include the principle of 'voluntarism' (Johnson and Dandeker 1989: 224). As a rule, a patron has economic and/or political resources at his disposal, or access to them, that are sought after by clients. This state of affairs endows him socially with a certain status and power. He employs these resources and influence on behalf of his clients, who return the favour bestowed in the form of labour and/or services in the widest sense of the word. It is of major importance that, apart from being asymmetrical and reciprocal, the relationship is diffuse. Whilst it primarily implies that everything the partners possess or respectively have at their disposal may become object of exchange, it also entails, as with 'euergetism', that *materialia* may be swapped for *immaterialia* (Waterbury 1977: 331ff).

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[33] Cf. Chapter 4.

At least on an ideological level, the actors in patron-client bonds, consider their relationship to result from free choice, although 'objectively' several restraints may perceived to be operative (Garnsey and Woolf 1989: 158ff). It is, for example, common practice for a son to inherit his father's clients (Saller 1982: 186; Krause 1987: 4). Usually, acceptance and continuation of such a transfer is rationalized with reference to some moral obligation by both parties. It should be emphasized that the clientage of a particular patron never acts as a united or organized body. A patron may have many clients, but he maintains a relationship with each of them separately. In order to stress this personal aspect, the relation is often indicated as 'dyadic' (Landé 1977; Eisenstadt and Roniger 1984: 2ff). On the other hand, a client may have several patrons. After all, a patron may not have at his disposal all economic and/or political resources a client may be in need of, or have access to them, at one and the same time or all the time. As long as all individual interests at stake do not interfere with each other the system works to the satisfaction of everyone involved. Such a situation particularly obtains in a society, in which 'patronage' operates as a 'system' (Johnson and Dandeker 1989: 223f).

Ideally, both parties profit, or regard themselves to profit, from a patron-client bond. In a way very similar to the 'cohesive experience' in nomadic groups, it serves as an 'informal contract' (Hall 1977: 510). Nevertheless, given the imbalance of status and power, a patron may feel free to contort the reciprocal relationship into a one-way-flow of goods and services. Therefore, it is important for a client to find himself in a position to put an end to the relationship, whenever he feels to be exploited. Whether he is able to do so, again, depends largely on the role of 'patronage' in public life. It makes a great difference, whether patrons have to compete for resources as well as clients, or whether they are in a position to close ranks so as to form a united front against their clients and, as a corollary, to degrade them to mere slaves (Johnson and Dandeker 1989: 232ff). Whether such developments occur or not, depends on the subtle interplay of many socio-economic, political and even geographical factors in a specific context (Waterbury 1977: 331, 337; Eisenstadt and Roniger 1984: 203ff). Given this framework, the nature of a patron-client relationship allows the partners complete freedom in moulding it into a form that suits their demands. Occasionally, they may even define certain rights and duties they consider to be of crucial interest for their relationship. After all, there is a broad spectrum of possibilities between a completely 'informal contract' and a full 'formal contract' (Waterbury 1977: 331f; Nicols 1980a: 367f; Eisenstadt and Roniger 1984: 48ff, 214ff). Together, these features imply that it is impossible for a universal definition of the phenomenon to be more precise than indicating general notions such as 'asymmetry', 'diffuseness', 'reciprocity', and the principle of 'voluntarism'.

As witnessed by many literary sources, the competition for clients manifested itself in many forms in Roman society. Patrons either directly competed for them, or tried to win the favour of patrons of a lower standing, who in entertaining such courtesy, as clients threw in their own lot and that of their clients with the 'big boss'. Indeed, the number of clients as well as their status, contributed to a patron's status and prestige. On the other hand, patrons of a lower standing courted powerful patrons in a similar way, because having the right connections and knowing the right people likewise, though from a different angle, added to one's status and prestige, with the possibility of attracting future clients. Thus, 'patronage' in the Roman Empire was mainly a matter of supply and demand, especially of status (Wallace-Hadrill 1989b: 71ff).

Saller (1982) and Wallace-Hadrill (1982) have clearly indicated that under the Early Empire the Emperor increasingly constituted the centre of power. As a result, the main object to compete for was his favour. An endless chain of patron-client bonds emerged, in many respects conferring a pyramid structure to society, at the top of which the Emperor was enthroned.[34] This vertical chain of relations had a horizontal counterpart in the phenomenon of 'hospitium', which was especially operative in the higher echelons of society (Nicols 1980b: 549ff). In a way similar to the former, the latter operated relations between persons of more or less equal social rank and status. However, considering that, in the Roman Empire, not all persons of equal social rank and status had exactly the same resources at their disposal, or the access to them, or could rely on the same influential officials, as well as the comparative conformity of motives underlying both phenomena, 'hospitium' may be regarded as a specific form of 'patronage'. In keeping with the situation, the partners may act towards each other both as a patron as well as as a client, whereas in a proper patron-client relationship one permanently and in all respects acts as a patron whilst the other reciprocally acts as a client (Wallace-Hadrill 1989b: 75ff).

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[34] Cf. also: Pleket (1971b) and Christ (1980).

Studies dealing with 'patronage' as a phenomenon often emphasize, that, in describing their relationship, the actors employ terms, which generally avoid denoting the factual dependency of one partner on the other. Instead, the partners have recourse to friendship- and kinship-terminology (Gellner 1977; Eisenstadt and Roniger 1984: 17; Saller 1982: 11ff and 158, note 64). This is not so much so as to conceal their true relationship, as much as to express a basic feature without which the 'informal contract' does not function properly, viz. mutual trust and loyalty, or as the ancients themselves say, *fides* (Brunt 1969: 7; Eisenstadt and Roniger 1984: 1ff, 15). Ideologically, these qualities are naturally conceived to reside, alongside 'solidarity', in friendship- and kinship-relations. Strictly speaking, then, it is out of the question that, in dealing with societies in which 'patronage' features prominently, any sound conclusion about the nature of social relationships may be drawn from the terminology involved (Saller 1989). Neither does it describe adequately their perception by the participants, for the latter are perfectly aware of existing inequalities of rank and power. Why else would they go to such great pains to establish the relationship in the first place? Likewise, despite the vocabulary of egalitarianism and affection, public opinion is quite capable of distinguishing the real nature of each of the social relationships and of discerning the various nuances in them (Saller 1982: 37ff). More than vocabulary, patterns of behaviour and social conventions reveal the participants' understanding of them (Saller 1989: 57).

As a phenomenon, 'patronage' permeated the societies that made up the Roman Empire. It may, for example, be discerned in societies governed by tribal or segmentary principles for admitting outsiders to a particular group. As such it regulates a number of rights and duties, in a manner very similar to the 'cohesive experience' prevalent here, so as to integrate outsiders into the community and not to leave them outlawed. As clients, they profit from the protective umbrella of the kinship-group or tribe against dangers from the outside, whereas their position within it is narrowly linked with that of their patron (Peters 1977; Gellner 1977). 'Patronage', then, manifested itself not only in numerous individual patron-client bonds, but in practically every branch of society and public life so as to supply an intricate network of vertical and cross-cutting ties. On account of this, it has been identified as the major lubricant for society to function smoothly and orderly (Wallace-Hadrill 1989b: 85). Thus, 'patronage' exceeds the purely relational concept defined earlier—which, indeed may be detected to operate in practically every society in one way or another—, in order to constitute a widespread system generating "wider integrative and social control functions than those identified through the discrete reciprocations of single patrons and clients" (Johnson and Dandeker 1989: 225). Featuring so prominently in daily life, 'patronage' thoroughly affected people's minds. As a concept it profoundly influenced the structuring of social relationships in the Roman Empire. Consequently, it served as a model for structuring other than strictly personal or social relations.[35]

Essential qualities of 'patronage' have been distinguished in regulating the relationship of Rome with its 'allies' (Rich 1989). Also, many honorific inscriptions hail provincial magistrates as good patrons for excelling in beneficent behaviour towards towns and villages in their district during their time of office (Braund 1989; Krause 1987; Nicols 1979; Warmington 1954).[36] Are we to understand that each member of these communities entertained a personal bond with the magistrates? Or, do the inscriptions simply intend to communicate that in bestowing favours and privileges to the community, they behaved like a patron towards his client and as a result left the particular community indebted (Nicols 1980a: 370ff)? In addition, it was common practice for members of the élite to grant all kinds of *collegia* the favour of joining, implying that they were willing to spend money to its benefit (Nock 1924: 106). Essential qualities of 'patronage' were even prominently operative in relations entered into on more or less formal grounds and of a temporary nature, as for example the need of a lawyer (Nicols 1980a: 366). Again, the distinction between 'euergetism' and this kind of 'patronage' is minimal and the transition from one phenomenon to the other very vague. As a complicating factor, there is a great chance for two individuals to be linked by multiple patron-client bonds, each operating on a different level. Next to a personal relationship, a client may simultaneously be attached to a patron on account of his membership of a *collegium* or another association. There even may be a further link when the same patron generously bestowed the community the client belongs to with all kinds of favours. It will be clear that the dynamics of each of these relations are quite different, and, accordingly, it may be expected that the behaviour of the actors is closely bound up with the situation. Nevertheless, the faces remain the same in each situation and the chance of one relationship influencing another is real.

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[35] The harsh criticism passed on Rich (1989) and Braund (1989) by Johnson and Dandeker (1989: 234ff), should be mollified. Although the latter are certainly right in stressing the importance of the principle of 'voluntarism' in patron-client bonds (Johnson and Dandeker 1989: 239), which indeed is conspicuously absent in Rome's interstate relations—"if Rome was the patron there could be no other" (Rich 1989: 127)—, they miss Rich's—and for that matter also Braund's—point when he asserts that the vocabulary of patronage dominated in indicating the essential qualities of these relations (Rich 1989: 123ff). Therefore, there is more at stake here than "a society whose institutions were saturated by the meanings and language of patronage" (Johnson and Dandeker 1989: 239). It is precisely this saturation of society by *the meanings and language of patronage*, implying a large range of nuances and multiple forms of appearance of the phenomenon, which on a connotative level facilitated the working of it as a model for structuring all sorts of relationship, including interstate relations. After all, it belongs to the essence of a model to provide rough contours only and not to prescribe every detail, as well as to afford the opportunity of making an eclectic use of its qualities.

[36] In order to denote the well-disposed attitude of a particular magistrate towards a city, he is recurrently described as its *father*, πατὴρ πόλεως (Mouterde 1925: 228; *IGLS*: 167, 1185) or sometimes as *patron and benefactor of the city*, πάτρωνα καὶ εὐεργέτην τῆς πόλεως (*IGLS*: 1258) or even *patron of the colony*, *patrono col*(*oniae*) (*IGLS*: 2759, 2760). Such descriptions undoubtedly reminisce the protecting and supporting qualities of fatherhood and patronage.

In the steppe-regions of the eastern parts of the Empire patron-client bonds were often reinforced by ties of kinship. This entails, that the principle of 'voluntarism' which is considered so crucial to prevent such a bond from degenerating into an exploitative relationship, falls into the background. Instead, the solidarity resulting from the 'cohesive experience' of tribal groups in the desert is deemed to restrain morally any possible proclivity of the tribal élite to exploit kin. Kinship-ties guarantee that they behave like good patrons. Here too, however, 'patronage' is not restricted to a one-to-one personal relationship, for as a member of the tribal élite, a patron may well act to promote group interests, viz. those of his own kin or tribe (Waterbury 1977: 335f).

Dedicators and Beneficiaries: social relationships

In dealing at length with a number of phenomena that to a large extent determined the structuring of social relationships in the Roman Empire, especially in its eastern areas, my aim has been to expose the wider cultural context in which the dedications that are the subject of this study have to be examined. This is not to say that they are commanded by this wider cultural context, but that some of its elements correspond with traditional local socio-cultural and religious patterns. After all, the dedications do not only play a role in the relationship between dedicator and the Divine, but also in that between dedicator and beneficiaries. Whether they are labelled economic, social or political, the general picture of relationships in the Roman Empire emerging from this exposition, is that they are governed by the bestowal and return of 'favours'. It is not so much a matter of exchanging goods and services of equal value that is at the heart of the reciprocation involved in 'euergetism', 'patronage' and the 'cohesive experience'. Rather, they aim at establishing or maintaining or expressing the good intentions fostered towards the other party in order to benefit from the favour it is in its power to bestow. Each of the participants has at its disposal or is in the possession of something the other is in need of or wishes for. The concept of reciprocity, then, is a major mechanism in operating the ensuing relationships. As Gouldner (1977: 35) has pointed out, a 'norm of reciprocity' as a cultural phenomenon is as universal and prominent as the incest-taboo.[37] A natural consequence of this norm is that a benefit or gift creates a debt on the part of the beneficiary which has to be acquitted. However, benefit and acquittal do not have to be equal; they have to be roughly *equivalent*. In addition, the exchange is naturally *heteromorf*, i.e. *materialia* may be exchanged for *immaterialia* and vice versa (Waterbury 1977: 331). Since the exchange is *roughly* equivalent, the relationship is sustained, for either the debt is not fully acquitted, or the acquittal of the debt is so lavish that it creates a new debt on the part of the original benefactor. Thus, the concept of reciprocity may account for both the initiation of a relationship and the sustaining of it. Therefore, it is a powerful binding-agent in society and it largely contributes to maintaining society's stability (Gouldner 1977: 39). When acting as a prominent factor for structuring social relationships, 'patronage' brings about a similar effect. In emphasizing verticality in social relations, it frustrates the development of 'class-consciousness' and draws heavily on 'group-solidarity'. Thus, egalitarian forms of ideology inherent to the awakening of 'class-consciousness' are reduced to a level of minor importance (Johnson and Dandeker 1989: 223).

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[37] Cf. also the 'classic' essay of Mauss (1966).

If phenomena such as those which have just been described dominate public and social life so much and, as a corollary, command people's mental engagements, then they may well explain the meaning and function which the objects dedicated with an inscription containing the Aramaic formula *ʿl ḥyy*, *for the life of*, or one of its equivalents, have in the relationship between dedicators and beneficiaries. In both the relationship between dedicator and the Divine and that between dedicator and beneficiaries, the concept of reciprocity is of utmost importance. Therefore, the act of dedicating should be conceived of as the bestowal of a benefit to a deity. Its return, which is expected to be concomitant, is utilized in the initiation or reinforcement of a social relationship. The question as to what conception most appropriately accounts for the motives generating the act of the dedicator, *do ut des*, *da ut dem* or perhaps *dabo cum dederis*, becomes of minor importance, because in essence all three of them owe their operative force to describing 'reciprocity'. As demonstrated by Gouldner, 'reciprocity' in one way or another entails reciprocation. Therefore, no matter how the status of the dedications is specified, it testifies to the initiation or reinforcement of a relationship (van Baaren 1964: 1f).

Leaving aside the fact that the formula belongs to the cultural reservoir of expressions blunted by local tradition in use for the occasion of dedicating something, and returning to a line of reasoning compatible with describing 'Paganism in the Roman Empire' foremost as 'votive religion', it might be advanced, that the dedicator specifies beforehand that he expects the return of his benefit to be 'life'. Considering the conception to be found throughout the ancient Near East that 'life' as a phenomenon originates from a divine act of creation, it makes good sense to direct a request of sustaining it to its Creator. Moreover, as 'life' exempt from physical and/or mental shortcomings was valued as something desired most, something almost divine, what else could someone better do to express his good intentions towards his beloved and others he, for whatever reason, cares about than showing his concern for them in a request for 'life' for their benefit. Especially, if it is related to people's preoccupations with their own salvation manifest in the predilection of the 'mysterious' element in many cults and the popularity of 'Mystery Cults' (Burkert 1987).

On the other hand, it might be argued that, since there is nothing in particular to ask for, the dedicator in his act of committing others to himself, for obvious reasons resorts to a general notion such as 'life'. And yet another option might consider it to originate from the fact that there is usually more than one beneficiary. Resorting to a general notion would then be the best strategy for not wronging anyone. In a slightly different line of perception, it might finally be proposed that when the beneficiaries are close relatives of the dedicator, notably 'sons' and 'brothers', it is in them that the name and honour of the family is conceived to be upheld and prolonged, perhaps even to the extent that the dedicator regards it to apply to his own 'life'.[38] In dedicating the particular object to their benefit, the dedicator exhorts and commits them to behave like dignified successors who uphold family-prestige. Simultaneously, he makes an effort to bring about such an effect beforehand. In attaching the family-name to the object for ever, the desired result is already partially obtained. It is up to the beneficiaries to accomplish the rest. If, on the other hand, the prime beneficiaries are officials, it might be suggested that, as they have somehow proven that they favour the dedicator, or as the dedicator expects them to do so, they in a sense contribute to the dedicator's prosperity and social standing, i.e. his 'life', as well as to that of his family. The dedications may be seen, then, as expressions of entertaining good relations by publicly connecting names and, moreover, as returning a bestowed or expected benefit by appealing to the Divine for rewarding the original or contemplated benefactors accordingly.[39] No matter what approach is adhered to in the interpretation of the dedications in question, whether phenomena predominant in society or presumed personal motives of the dedicator—the two more often than not being intricately linked to one another—, are taken as point of departure, the concept of reciprocity features prominently.

Finally, it should be noted that in his act of dedication, the dedicator does not only establish or reinforce his own relationship with the divine recipient. In directing the benefits expected to result from the deity because of his dedication to others, he simultaneously brings about or testifies to a relationship between beneficiaries and deity. In essence, we are dealing with a 'three-cornered affair'. It may be assumed that relations between two out of the three constituents of this 'affair' are reciprocal, viz. between dedicator and deity and between dedicator and beneficiaries. As regards the relationship between deity and beneficiaries, there initially is no such thing as reciprocity. After all, according to the text of the inscription, it is only via the dedicator that a relationship between them exists. Surely, it moves from deity to beneficiaries, but it does not necessarily move back again, for no motive whatsoever for the beneficiaries to favour the deity can be derived from the text. In view of the close link between divinities and tribal associations in the ancient Near East, however, it may be advanced that, at least in those instances in which the beneficiaries are presented as the dedicator's kin, relations between deity and beneficiaries are reciprocal as well, despite the fact that it is not manifest from the text of the inscription (Teixidor 1980a: 277ff; Henninger 1981: 40ff). If the beneficiaries are not related to the dedicator in terms of kinship, there still is a possibility that they entertain relations with the divine recipient, although it generally entails a lot more trouble to demonstrate such a tie.

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[38] Cf. for the importance of having male offspring and relatives: Brichto (1973). Brichto's article is based on data from the world of the Old Testament. However, if conceived as a case-study, its results may apply to adjacent areas in space and time, for it shows something of the mental environment of our dedications.

[39] Sarkisian (1983) focuses attention on the practice of dedicating children to a temple in order to establish or reinforce existing or contemplated ties with the beneficiaries. Accordingly, some lines in a dedication dated to 128 BC read: "... zum Wohle der Könige, zum Wohle seiner selbst, zum Wohle der Urukäer, zum Wohle seines Volkes und der Kinder..." (Sarkisian 1983: 133).

Nevertheless, leaving aside all sorts of archaeological reservations, in reproducing a relationship between a divinity and/or its sanctuary on the one hand and a particular group of people on the other, the dedications may well illustrate and/or illuminate our understanding of the role of religion in tribal life in the Ancient Near East in Roman times.

Concluding comments

Considering all the social, religious and cultural pecularities, then, the best approach for interpreting the dedications that are the subject of this study seems to be the establishment of their meaning and function in their immediate environment and context. Such a strategy takes into account both the slight distinctions in employment of the formula and the variation in objects of dedication in the different find-spots. A chronological presentation may foremost account for any particular development taking place. Therefore, the Nabataean inscriptions shall be examined first. Subsequently, the Palmyrene and Hatrene material, which is the most substantial and, moreover, largely contemporary, but, nevertheless, shows notable differences in a number of respects, shall be dealt with in two separate chapters. In the last section, it will be verified whether and to what extent scattered and isolated objects may contribute to the interpretation of this particular category of dedications. Finally, I shall attempt to tie up some loose ends.

CHAPTER TWO

FOR THE LIFE OF . . . KINGS

THE NABATAEAN PERCEPTION AND EMPLOYMENT OF THE FORMULA

Preliminary remarks

The rise and fall of the Nabataean Empire is one of the most intriguing topics in ancient Near Eastern history today. Throughout the present century, excavations at sites designated as 'Nabataean' have yielded a large mass of data which, in turn, has resulted in an overwhelming corpus of publications. However, much about the history and culture of the Nabataeans still remains obscure. The epigraphical record, for instance, amounts to nearly 4000 inscriptions, but the majority of them are short graffiti-texts of one or more names together with a genealogy comprising one or, at most, two generations and accompanied by a benediction. This limited information does not substantially contribute to our knowledge and conception of Nabataean achievements.

In an attempt to solve the many problems posed and in order to overcome as much as possible the lacunae in our information, commentators have frequently taken recourse to classical authors such as Diodorus Siculus (first century BC), Strabo (*c*.64 BC–*c*.25 AD), Josephus Flavius (*c*.37–*c*.100 AD) and the Biblical books of Maccabees. However, the usage of these sources for reconstructing Nabataean history and culture poses its own problems.[1] Excepting the books of Maccabees, the authors, as they themselves indicate, only provide second-hand information on the Nabataeans. Moreover, it is questionable to what extent Diodorus' and Strabo's accounts are representative of Nabataean society as a whole.[2] Obviously, Josephus as well as the books of Maccabees write on them only if it is relevant to the history of Israel. As a result, the picture that can be drawn of Nabataean history and culture is far from complete, whereas many proposed traits are open to serious discussion.[3]

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[1] Cf. Appendix A for a discussion on Diodorus Siculus and Strabo.

[2] A particular example might be Strabo's account of the expedition of Aelius Gallus, which must have taken place in about 25 BC on the initiative of Augustus himself. It turned out to be a total fiasco for the Romans. According to Strabo, Syllaios, the *Nabataean Administrator*, was to blame since he seized every opportunity to sabotage the Romans. The negative picture of Syllaios may well have influenced Strabo's account of the Nabataean

The consensus is that as a corporate body the Nabataeans make their first substantial contribution to history in about 312 BC. As related by Diodorus, they succeed in resisting an expedition equipped by Antigonos Monophthalmos (382–301 BC), the ruler of Asia Minor and Syria, which being part of his strategy against Ptolemy (367–283 BC), the ruler of Egypt, was bound to subdue them. Together with Seleucus I Nicator (356–281 BC), each of these former generals of Alexander the Great (356–323 BC), had been allotted a part of the Eastern territory of the immense Empire after Alexander's death. They engaged in constant warfare with each other until the battle of Ipsus (301 BC) brought a provisional settlement of their conflicts. It may be inferred from Diodorus that at this point in history the Nabataeans dwelt in the region south of the Dead Sea, i.e. the area that prior to them was inhabited by the Edomites (Diodorus XIX, 94). Soon this was to become the heartland of the Nabataean Empire, harbouring one of its capital centers: Petra.

In the course of time the Nabataeans managed to monopolize the trade of aromatics, myrrh and frankincense, grown in the southern parts of the Arabian peninsula, as well as that of spices and other commodities imported from the Far East that came by ship and were discharged at Gerrha on the Persian Gulf. Like the products from the south of the peninsula, they were transported by camel through the Arabian desert to emporia such as Hegra. Thence, they found their way to the consumers around the Mediterranean. This transit-trade proved itself to be an abundant source of income providing an ever increasing wealth for the Nabataeans. Undoubtedly, it considerably contributed to their rise as a political entity during the second and first centuries BC. In describing the events of these times Josephus, both in his *Antiquitates Judaeorum* as well as in his *De bello Judaica*, frequently alludes to the 'king of the Nabataeans'. Occasionally,

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royal house as well as other features of Nabataean society (cf. Strabo, *Geography* XVI, 22–24).

[3] As witnessed by the many different opinions held both on details and on the general outlook of Nabataean history and culture. Cf. Starcky (1955), Starcky (1966), Hammond (1973), Negev (1976a), Negev (1977), Lindner (1980b), Roschinski (1980), Bowersock (1983), Knauf (1986), Wenning (1987).

epigraphical and numismatic references confirm the existence of the Nabataean institution of kingship at that time.[4] This points to a certain degree of political organization possibly suggesting that the rise of the Nabataean as well as that of the Hasmonaean Empire and other small independent states should intrinsically be linked with the weakening of Seleucid power at the end of the second and beginning of the first centuries BC (Cantineau 1978a: 2). However that may be, from about the middle of the first century BC onwards, at the time when the Romans became increasingly involved in Near Eastern affairs, the Nabataean Empire constituted a power that had to be reckoned with, for its rulers ardently engaged in 'international' politics.

At this point in time the information about the dealings of the Nabataeans becomes less scarce. Dated epigraphical sources conveying more than only names gradually increase. Most of the inscriptions, however, belong to the reign of Aretas IV Philodemos (8 BC–40 AD) whose rule was characterized by political stability and tranquillity among the Nabataeans and their neighbours. He established a sort of 'Pax Nabataeana'. Under these conditions transit-trade soared to heights not known before and paid very well. Prestigious building-programmes were initiated throughout the Empire, either as completely new works or as the enlargement and embellishment of existing structures. In Petra, for instance, the Qasr el-Bint Farʿun, the main temple was (re)built (Parr 1968: 19f). Similarly, building-activity on temples at Siʿa in the Hawran (Dentzer and Dentzer 1981: 79f) and Khirbet et-Tannur (McKenzie 1988: 82) have to be dated to this period. In addition, some of the most elaborate rock-cut tombs in Petra, as well as most in Hegra seem to have been constructed (Negev 1976b: 207). During Aretas IV's reign, the Nabataean achievements reached their zenith as a result of his ability to exercize firm control in all corners of the Empire. Its most extensive dimensions, then, probably have to be linked with his name, since most of the inscriptions found in Hegra are dated by his years of rule. Whilst a number of them ascribe the tombs to which they belong to members of the military and/or civil or administrative service, the epigraphical record only positively provides proof of the Nabataean presence in Hegra during this Aretas' reign. Yet from its silence about previous times it may not be inferred that they were not present there, especially since so far the site has not been systematically excavated. It is beyond doubt, though, that in the course of the first century AD Hegra lost its status as a major emporium and subsequently became less important.

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[4] Cf. CIS II: 349; Cantineau (1978b: 2); Cantineau (1978b: 43). For the numismatic references: cf. Starcky (1966: 907).

The consensus of scholars is that Aretas IV's successors faced the gradual decline of the Empire which culminated in the Roman annexation in 106 AD. From then onwards the Nabataean territories constituted the Roman *provincia Arabia* (Bowersock 1971: 228ff; idem 1975: 519; idem 1983: 76ff). A main factor contributing to the decline was the diversion of important trade-routes from the Arabian peninsula to other areas. This entailed that the Nabataeans lost their monopoly on the trade of South-Arabian and Far Eastern wares and products. Instead, as premeditated by Augustus (Strabo, *Geography* XVI, 4, 22), the route along the river Nile downstream to Alexandria as well as that along the river Euphrates through the Syrian desert via Palmyra towards the Mediterranean gained in importance. Consequently, much of the Nabataean business came into Palmyrene hands during the first and beginning of the second centuries AD. The profits of transit-trade previously collected by the Nabataeans, now allowed for the Palmyrene upsurge as a commercial and political centre.

The magnificent rock-cut tombs in Petra and to a lesser extent those in Hegra, as well as the building-activities under Aretas IV, leave the impression that the standard of Nabataean architecture was high. In addition, the Nabataeans acquired comprehensive knowledge of hydraulics and irrigation-techniques as suggested by the ingenious waterworks of Petra (Gunsam 1980), and the clever methods of water-control allowing agriculture in the middle of the desert (Hammond 1967). As in tomb-cutting, the knowledge of rock-cutting techniques was of utmost importance for water-storage. Pottery was another outstanding feature of Nabataean material culture with its development being attributed to the last quarter of the first century BC. The field of jurisdiction also points to the achievements of Nabataean culture with an elaborate legal apparatus being inferred from epigraphic evidence. Tomb-inscriptions from Hegra give detailed rules concerning burying-rights and the alienation of tombs. The uniformity of procedures to be followed for the enforcement of the regulations for proper use as was formulated by the founders of the tombs, including the imposition of fines, is striking. Thus, it may be suggested that, at least in these matters and at least by the time of Aretas IV, whose years of reign serve for dating the inscriptions, the Nabataeans had worked out a functional legal system. Furthermore, the casual remark of Strabo (*Geography* XVI, 4, 21), based on an account related to him by Athenodorus, that in Petra Romans and foreigners, i.e. non-Nabataeans, "often engaged in lawsuits, both with one another and with the natives", similarly points to a developed jurisdiction. At least it presupposes an impartial body that was equally recognized by all parties. Since both Strabo and Athenodorus take the procedures operating at Petrene courts for granted, they must have resembled those with which they were familiar at Roman and Greek courts.

Whilst it is beyond our scope to investigate every single detail of the many problems attached to presenting a coherent picture of Nabataean history and culture, one major issue should be briefly dealt with, viz. the discrepancy between archaeological remains labelled as 'Nabataean' and the ensuing, uncritical presumption that their authors constituted such a uniform body that they may unconditionally be described as *the* Nabataeans. Traditionally, the main criteria for determining whether a site is classified as 'Nabataean' have been the occurrence of a certain type of pottery and/or the existence of epigraphical remains using the 'Nabataean' script. The latter, being a particular form of Aramaic, is found in the north-western parts of the Arabian peninsula, the Sinai- and Negev-desert, Transjordan, southern Syria and in regions around the Dead Sea.[5] Although its origins remain obscure—are usually attributed to the middle of the second century BC—the script is definitely in use until the fourth century AD.[6] As distinguishing features the inscriptions yield a number of Arabisms, especially in a funerary context, and a host of Arabic names (O'Connor 1986).[7] The fine pottery was manufactured in large quantities during the last decades of the first century BC and the first three centuries AD; the area in which it is found roughly coinciding with that in which the inscriptions occur.

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[5] A contested issue in the discussion on the boundaries established by the Nabataean Empire is whether it included the Hawran. Opponents usually refer to the particular development of this area in relation to that of the Nabataean Empire as well as to its own unique expression of Hellenism. Gawlikowski (1990a: 2661) points to the epigraphical record which is highly Greek in nature (cf. Starcky 1985: 168, 173). Knauf (1986: 74f), on the other hand, believes that this is a matter of minor interest for the application of a particular language has no decisive bearing on the geo-political status of the area in which it is found. Alongside Aramaic, the inhabitants of the Nabataean Empire felt free to employ other languages such as Greek and Safaitic. Additionally, opponents of the inclusion often allude to the fact that the inhabitants of the Hawran were mainly engaged in agriculture, especially viniculture, which they consider to be contrary to the Nabataean 'spirit'. Those in favour point to the monumental achievements of, for example, Siʿa and Qanawat, dated to the first century AD and undoubtedly displaying Nabataean features (Wenning 1987: 11). Irrespective of whether the Hawran was an integral part of the Nabataean Empire, it certainly belonged to its spheres of influence. By suggesting that "the Nabataean presence always was far more commercial than either political or military", Peters (1977: 275) very appropriately points to our lacking knowledge of the nature of Nabataean rule in this context. Sartre (1985a: 50ff) and Dentzer (1985c: 392ff) envisage an independent development of the Hawran with all kinds of influences including Nabataean.

[6] The inscription found in Elusa, an emporium on the road from Petra to Gaza, is usually regarded as one of the oldest (Cantineau 1978b: 43; Negev 1977: 545). The

Recently, Knauf (1986), followed by Wenning (1987: 15f), has observed the limits of these criteria and the pitfalls inherent to them in rendering an adequate history of the Nabataeans as well as our perception of the range of Nabataean culture. There appears to be a major discrepancy between the period in which the use and production of 'Nabataean' pottery and inscriptions can be demonstrated—well into the fourth century AD—with the establishment and maintenance of a political entity such as the 'Nabataean' Empire that ended in 106 AD. Whilst the pottery and the script were intensively used by the 'Nabataeans', i.e. the corporate body of people responsible for creating the Nabataean Empire, one should hesitate in unconditionally associating its mere occurrence with a 'Nabataean' political presence. Rather, the particular cultural forms developed in the Nabataean Empire exercized a tremendous appeal and, thus, had a considerable influence, even after the Roman annexation, especially given the peaceful nature of that annexation and the Roman reluctance to suppress indigenous cultural expressions. Moreover, since the dimensions of the *provincia Arabia* initially coincide with those of the former Nabataean Empire, it is very likely that there were no significant changes amongst the inhabitants, the bearers of culture, nor in the administrative entities (Bowersock 1971: 228ff; idem 1983: 90ff). The persistence of 'Nabataean' culture can be explained by these circumstances.

Using 'Nabataean' pottery and/or script to establish the dimensions of the Nabataean Empire, then, becomes highly problematical without additional testimony, because the 'Nabataean' presence it demonstrates may be of a very different nature than that during the Empire. The graffiti from the Sinai peninsula, especially those from its southern parts, indicate the complexities. If they can be dated to the second and third centuries AD, then they cannot be adduced as a decisive argument for establishing the dimensions of the former Nabataean

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inscription found at en-Nemara, near Bostra, dated to 328 AD, shows an Arabic text in Nabataean script (Lidzbarski 1908: 34).

[7] Although O'Connor's observations are appropriate, funeral texts stand out, both in number and length. Therefore, it is no surprise that Arabisms appear mainly in a funerary context.

Empire, since it is possible that they were inscribed by mercenaries in the Roman army with a Nabataean background. By men recruited from areas that once indeed did belong to the Nabataean Empire, or by nomadic groups that for one reason or another had drifted into the peninsula long after the Empire as such had ceased to exist.[8]

If any evaluation of the nature of the Nabataean presence and/or influence is curtailed, it is beyond doubt that during the Empire a considerable political impact was exercized. Nevertheless, it is extremely difficult to establish the exact boundaries of the Nabataean Empire, especially in desert-areas, although it must have comprised most of the territory referred to earlier. Hammond (1973: 29, 65ff) and Knauf (1986: 76) have very properly observed the diversity of landscapes within the Empire. A considerable part consisted of desert and steppe-land inhabited by nomads herding flocks of goats and sheep, as well as by bands of robbers and outlaws preying on caravans and the riches of cultivated land.[9] The desert was traversed by caravan-tracks punctuated by halting-places which, depending on their importance, served a number of purposes. Their main task was to provide for physical relief and refreshment for the members of caravans and their pack-animals. At some of them, like Iram and perhaps Oboda, a temple-complex additionally met a person's spiritual needs (Negev 1977: 586; Wenning 1987: 101). These stations were inhabited permanently only by regular personnel. Some of them were also garrisoned by military detachments for protecting caravans from the attacks of desert-dwellers and to keep the peace among them. A number of holy places, such as Khirbet et-Tannur, were presumably scattered throughout the Empire, and at these sites, excavations have primarily yielded religious material (Negev 1977: 605). Apart from the steppe-land Nabataean territory comprised large tracts of arable land, like the Hawran that was very well suited for viniculture (Villeneuve 1985: 121ff).[10] The cultivation of otherwise waste land was a major Nabataean achievement, due to their knowledge of irrigation-techniques. Whilst the Negev-desert stands out in this respect, it may be assumed that similar enterprises were initiated elsewhere. Finally, Nabataean territory was dotted with major and minor urban centers and emporia for administrative, commercial and religious purposes.

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[8] Cf. Littmann and Meredith (1953); Negev (1967).

[9] Cf. Chapter 1.

[10] Negev (1977: 647ff) adds the Negev-desert as an area of sedentarization.

The diversity of landscapes involving so many distinct activities corresponds very well with the overall picture drawn of ancient Near Eastern society in the previous chapter. Accordingly, it is highly problematical to speak of *the* Nabataeans as a homogeneous group of people. Rather, society in the Nabataean Empire was composed of many different groups, each engaged in divergent economic activities in diverse geographical settings, all under the umbrella of Nabataean administration (Knauf 1986). The patterns of interaction between the urban, sedentary and nomadic components correspond with those extant in ancient Near Eastern society at large. Each of the components displays a distinct social structure and has its own main frame of reference; respectively the city, the village and the tribe. Simultaneously, overlaps frequently must have occurred. However, scholarly interest about the Nabataeans, their history and the development of their society, has repeatedly rested upon the accounts of Diodorus Siculus and Strabo. The sources upon which Diodorus and Strabo respectively draw, are separated by a chronological gap of approximately 300 years. Because of the differences in the accounts, it has been assumed that during this time the Nabataeans exchanged a nomadic for a sedentary way of life. Yet for the greater part this should be rejected as a misinterpretation.[11] At most, Diodorus and Strabo illustrate that Petra developed from a simple rock entrenchment into a fabulous and capital city during this period.

That the population of the Nabataean Empire was not as homogeneous as usually suggested, is substantiated by Negev's (1982) observation that there is a certain relation between the occurrence of personal names and particular regions. A survey of the epigraphical record demonstrates that, out of about 1100 personal names, 950 are found only in one of four regions. Some of them belong exclusively to the Sinai, others to the Hawran, again others to the Hejaz, and finally a number of them are restricted to the heartland around Petra.[12] By contrast, only 13 names, including those of the royal family, are shared by all regions. If, as rightly advanced by Knauf (1986: 77), nomenclature is part of family- and clan-tradition, then, in addition to a diversity of economic engagements, a tribal diversity along certain geographical lines within the Empire may be suggested. One of the major issues in the conception of the Nabataean Empire, then, is the nature of Nabataean presence in each area. Negev's survey suggests that, apart from administration, nothing more than the use of a common script, and later the use of a common type of pottery, connects the inhabitants of the different regions.

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[11] Cf. Appendix A.

[12] Knauf (1986: 77) does not reproduce Negev's results adequately. Instead of Sinai as a distinct district, he lists southern Jordan.

The origins of the Nabataeans

Traditionally, the Nabataeans have been depicted as a homogeneous South-Arabian tribe that during the seventh and sixth centuries BC wandered towards the North (Starcky 1955: 87; Bowersock 1971: 222; Hammond 1973: 9ff; Lindner 1980b: 39f).[13] From the beginning of the fourth century BC they settled in Petra and its environment, thereby supplanting the former inhabitants of the area, the Edomites. Thence, their influence steadily increased to establish caravan-tracks and emporia. The abundant flow of income ensuing from trade enabled them to establish their extensive Empire during the last three centuries BC. This hypothesis is primarily based on the marginal resemblance of Nabataean and Sabaean stone-cutting techniques, as well as on the number of Arabisms in the Aramaic inscriptions. Milik (1982) has slightly modified this view by suggesting that they originate from the eastern parts of the Arabian peninsula; the coastal area along the Persian Gulf harbouring one of the most important receiving depots of wares and products from the Far East, Gerrha.

By contrast, Knauf (1986) depicts a totally different course of events claiming that the Nabataeans do not originate in a remote area of the Arabian peninsula. He places their roots in the Syrian-Mesopotamian desert or, perhaps, in the northern parts of the peninsula and plausibly suggests them to be a remnant or fissured part of the once powerful tribe of the Qedarites. In the middle of the fifth century BC, a Qedarite sheikh ruled as a client-king of the sovereign of Persia over important parts of the future Nabataean Empire: Sinai, Hejaz, southern Jordan and southern Syria. Knauf pictures that the remnant part of the Qedarites wandered into the land of Edom and intermingled with the Edomites. Conspicuously, a number of Edomite gods appear in a Nabataean setting and apparently were part of the Nabataean pantheon (Knauf 1986: 82f; Lindner 1980b: 42f). Presumably, former Edomite groups were incorporated into the future Nabataean Empire on a basis of equality. Knauf also suggests that this remnant part managed to supplant the élite-representatives of legal authority and filled the vacuum of power that emerged when the Neo-Babylonian Empire was waning, whilst the Achaemenids refrained from absorbing the area into their extensive Empire.

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[13] Negev (1976c: 131) suggests the area of modern Yemen as a place of origin.

Owing to military superiority resulting from the development and perfection of the camel-saddle during the fifth century BC, an achievement that is attributed to the Nabataeans (Knauf 1986: 79; French 1988), the remnant part of the Qedarites was able to constitute itself as the new overlords in the area. The Nabataean tribe or people predestined to establish the future Nabataean Empire, resulted from the integration of Edomites and Qedarites and its simultaneous absorption of the power-vacuum. Although Knauf pertinently rejects the idea that the Nabataeans ousted the Edomites so as to replace them—such a presentation of facts would grossly simplify an intricate social and historical process—, he prudently leaves the possibility open for independent Edomite groups to have wandered westwards as a reaction to the appearance of the newcomers in their area, thus becoming the ancestors of the people known as the Idumaeans. This would accommodate the casual remarks in some classical writings that the Nabataeans and Idumaeans were related to one another and in others that the latter were driven away from their homestead by the former.[14]

In addition to integration with Edomite groups, Knauf points to centripetal forces unleashed by powerful tribal clusters such as those of the nascent tribe of the Nabataeans. Tribal groups in need of protection seek to join such clusters. In turn, the increase of people contributes to the power and esteem of the protector and consequently it becomes more attractive to other groups, which again augments its power and prestige. Knauf does recognize the important role assumed by military power in these processes, for instance as a prime cause for unleashing centripetal forces, but he considers the non-violent quality regulating them to be decisive.[15] Over and above subjugation by force, it contributes to political and social stability, since it creates a number of common interests, which induce a particular communal spirit. Eventually, as fusing groups expand, the process may culminate into a confederation of tribes. Inscriptions, especially from Hegra, suggest that the Nabataeans entered into a confederation with the Shalamaeans. A number of times the phrase *like something is holy with the Nabataeans and the Shalamaeans* is found, which points to an advanced stage of co-operation.[16] Knauf pictures the constitution of the Nabataean Empire to result from military superiority and collaterally the diplomatic ability to commit tribal groups. Subsequently, the Nabataeans gradually manoeuvred themselves in a position to master the caravan-tracks that became crucial to their economy. Simultaneously, they managed to monopolize the trade of luxury wares and products from the southern parts of the Arabian peninsula as well as the Far East. Hence they secured an important source of income that may have allowed them to keep taxes, which dominant groups usually imposed on associated groups, clans and tribes, low. If so, then this state of affairs surely contributed to social stability within the Empire.

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[14] Cf. Strabo, *Geography* XVI, 2: 34.

[15] Cf. Kammerer (1929–30: 384).

Over and beyond a territorial state, the Nabataean Empire was a kind of a multiple personal union. As members of the upper class, the Nabataeans occupied the important military, political, economic and, perhaps, religious offices. At the apex stood the Nabataean royal 'house'. Knauf (1986: 78f) postulates that the Nabataeans were a minority within their own Empire. A certain skill of committing other groups must have been proper to them, which, backed up by an army well-equipped for its task in desert-country, made them essentially usufructuaries of power (Wenning 1990: 380f; Gawlikowski 1990a: 2660). With the risk of explaining *ignotum per ignotum*, it is sometimes suggested that Nabataean rule shared many features with Achaemenid rule. Central authority, epitomized by the royal dynasty and ultimately the king himself, manifested itself throughout the Empire by members of the ruling clan. Appointed to substantiate central or royal policy at a local level, they resided in major political and commercial centers. In the royal epithet *mlk nbṭw*, *king of the Nabataeans*, the latter element, then, primarily refers to the clan supplying the king rather than indicating that each inhabitant of the Empire sincerely identified himself as a Nabataean. Thus, it bolsters the leading position of the clan.

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[16] Cf. CIS II: 197, 199 and 206. In RES, no. 2066, engraved on a stele found in Umm ed-Djimal, someone is said to belong to the *tribe* (or: clan) *of the Shalamaeans*, *dy mn ʾl šlmw*. This qualification resembles Palmyrene *dy mn pḥd X*, *who belongs to the tribe of X*. Therefore, Roschinski's (1980: 149, note 78) suggestion that *šlmw* should be conceived of as "Verbündete", i.e. the clans or tribes which the Nabataeans managed to put under an obligation should be refuted. Moreover, Milik (1958: 231) published an inscription describing someone as *šlmyʾ*, *the Shalamaean*. It is engraved on an altar of unknown provenance and it is probably dated to the fifth year of king Rabbel II (*c*.75 AD). Finally, CIS II: 380 reads: (1) *ʿbdrbʾl [ ] šlmw* (2) *[ ] dkyryn bṭb*. Perhaps l.1 should be rendered as *Abdrabbel* [*who belongs to the tribe of the*] *Shalamaeans*. If so, then the tribe's presence is secured in Petra too.

Excepting his positive identification of the Nabataeans as a remnant or fissured part of the Qedarites, Knauf's presentation of the development and establishment of the Nabataean Empire is far more plausible than the traditional view.[17] Anthropological research has extensively demonstrated that processes of fission and fusion, which Knauf pictures as lying at the heart of the genesis of the Nabataean Empire, are among the most distinctive features of segmentary or tribal society.[18] Moreover, in concert with the traditional view that the Empire was more or less populated by one homogeneous tribe, Knauf's presentation accounts for a certain unity and uniformity of cultural expressions throughout the Empire. If the Nabataeans constituted the ruling class, then such expressions were at the least inspired, but usually initiated and patronized by them.[19] After all, aside from all practical purposes, the aim of cultural expressions in the broadest sense, whether produced by rulers or subjects, is often to present and/or represent authority.[20] Depending on who initiates them, they express or intend to evoke compliance, but usually the two are intricately entwined. Furthermore, it is inherent in the nature of an empire such as the Nabataean that, in order to create or promote a sense of unity, a common frame of reference is provided. As the epitome of the royal dynasty and central authority, the Nabataean king played an important part.

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[17] Crucial to his identification of the Nabataeans as a remnant part of the Qedarites are two texts from the third century BC (Knauf 1986: 83). The first is the so-called *Hierodulenlisten von Maʿin*, presenting an almost complete list of stations along the 'frankincense-route'. Precisely at the point where it should mention the Nabataeans, it refers to the Qedarites instead. In addition, the Biblical book 'Song of Songs' (1: 5) mentions the Qedarites in association with the Shalamaeans. However, although Knauf's identification may be correct, it should be noted that epigraphically the association of the Nabataeans with the Shalamaeans is not attested before the turn of the Era. Moreover, so far it is mainly found in Hegra, a remote, albeit important, emporium and only once, perhaps, in an inscription from the Nabataean heartland (cf. previous note). Finally, the Shalamaeans do not feature in the *Hierodulenlisten von Maʿin*, although this may be mere coincidence.

[18] Cf. Sigrist (1967: 32ff).

[19] As Wenning (1987: 11) states: "Nabaṭu bezeichnet das Nabatäervolk, das mehrere Stämme, Clans, etc. unterschiedlicher Herkunft und unterschiedlichen Charakters umfasst (vgl.bes.Hauran), die auch nach der (teils erzwungenen) Integration unter das Patronat der Könige in Petra durchaus ihre Eigenarten bewahrten und sich regional z.T. relativ selbständig entwickelten".

[20] Cf. Price (1984), who contrives to demonstrate in an elucidatory manner that the cult of the Roman Emperor in Asia Minor should primarily be conceived as a cultural expression, usually initiated by the subjects to (re)present Roman authority.

The nature of Nabataean epigraphy

From 4000 recorded Nabataean inscriptions and graffiti, only 16 definitely yield the Aramaic formula *ʿl ḥyy*, *for the life of*. Twice, it may plausibly restored (CIS II: 188; Negev 1961: 128). Once the equivalent *lḥyy* is found (Beyer and Livingstone 1987: 291). Another equivalent, *ʿl šlmʾ*, *for the well-being of*, is also employed twice (Cantineau 1978b: 24; Bowersock 1975: 514). The majority of these inscriptions are dated prior to the Roman annexation of the Nabataean Empire in 106 AD, especially from the reign of Aretas IV onwards. Conspicuously, both inscriptions containing the formula *ʿl šlmʾ* belong to the middle of the second century AD.

Most of the inscriptions having the formula *ʿl ḥyy* were found in Petra and its immediate surroundings. Others originate from road-stations and emporia like Elusa, Iram, Khirbet et-Tannur and Oboda. Two were discovered in far-away places as Puteoli in Italy and Milete in Ionia. Unfortunately, the majority of these 21 inscriptions are badly preserved. They, moreover, cover a very wide period in time—about 300 years—and were found at very different spots. In addition, sites with an abundant reservoir of funerary texts, like Hegra, have yielded very few dedications and *vice versa*. This restricts our possibilities of supplementing and verifying information comparatively, especially concerning the relationship between dedicators and beneficiaries. However, since most of the inscriptions date from the heyday of the Nabataean Empire and since most of them list the Nabataean king or other members of the royal family as the sole or major beneficiaries, the most plausible interpretation is that they present and represent central authority, particularly because honorific inscriptions are completely absent (Starcky 1966: 937). The Nabataeans did not erect statues or the like—at least they did not epigraphically express it—*lyqr*, *in honour of*, leading or meritorious inhabitants of the Empire.[21] In fact, very few inscriptions mention the erection of statues of mortals. Two of them, both originating from Petra, describe the statue in question as that of a Nabataean king. The first, dated to the first half of the first century BC, is damaged at the right and, consequently, informs us very poorly on the identity of the dedicator (CIS II: 349).[22] It relates the erection of a statue of king Rabbel I.[23] The other is reasonably complete. It mentions the erection of a statue of king Aretas IV by a *ptwr’*, probably a *religious official* (Starcky and Strugnell 1966: 237). Although erecting a statue of a king undoubtedly had honorific connotations, neither of these inscriptions explicitly states so.

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[21] In the Nabataean epigraphical record the verb *yqr* occurs only once (Starcky 1965:

The other inscriptions recording the erection of statues of men originate from Si‘a, a renowned religious center in the Hawran featuring a temple of Baalshamin, who, incidentally, does not belong to the core of the Nabataean pantheon. This situation corresponds with the observation that the Hawran shows, next to a Nabataean one, a variety of cultural influences (Gawlikowski 1990a: 2661). The inscriptions date from the beginning of the first century AD. They were found in the temple of Baalshamin. One of them relates that a number of people had a socle made for a particular statue (Cantineau 1978b: 15). The other, an Aramaic-Greek bilingual text, records the erection of a statue for someone who had the temple of Baalshamin enlarged (CIS II: 164). Excepting the names of the dedicators and the beneficiary, the Aramaic text does not yield any conspicuous information. The Greek text, however, uses the verbal form ἐτείμησεν, *he honours*. It moreover states that the statue was erected ἀρετῆς τε καὶ εὐσεβείας χάριν, *because of virtue and piety*. By contrast, the Aramaic does not

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44). The ‘master’ of the beneficiary honours him in a funerary context. This contrasts sharply with Palmyrene practice (cf. Chapter 3).

[22] The first character of *ṣlm’*, *the image*, is restored. Although the contents of the inscription justify the restoration, it may nevertheless be erroneous. All the more so, since the reading of the third character is also questionable. The drawing provided by Cantineau (1978b: 1), suggests reading “r”, “d”, “k” or “b” rather than “m”. The Nabataeans had a predilection for aniconic representation of both gods (Bowersock 1990: 8, 20) and men (Starcky 1965: 46) and they did not use the word *ṣlm’* for designating it. Only under the ever increasing Hellenistic influence deities, and presumably in the wake of it men as well, acquired an anthropomorphic outlook. This manifested itself especially from Aretas IV’s reign onwards. However, the archaic language of CIS II: 349 definitely advocates a date around the beginning of the first century BC. This casts further doubts on the correctness of the reading *ṣlm’*, *image* or *statue*. Wenning (1987: 202, 239) suggests a date of *c*.69 BC.

[23] Commentators roughly agree on the period of his reign, but have different opinions about the exact term and about his place in the dynastic line. Cf. Starcky (1966: 905ff), Hammond (1973: 17), Negev (1977: 530ff), Roschinski (1980: 141f), Lindner (1980a: 107), idem (1980b: 53), Bowersock (1983: 71, note 43).

hint at the honoured person's incentives, which substantiates the claim that the Nabataean élite did not erect statues, certainly not in combination with an honorific inscription, for the material (re)presentation of central authority. CIS II: 164 can be explained more plausibly from the unique cultural position of the Hawran.

However, given that the beneficiaries of dedications with inscriptions containing the formula *ʿl ḥyy* are primarily kings and other members of the royal dynasty, it may be suggested that these dedications, among others, perform such a function. Of course, the inscription is the only way by which the observer is informed about the beneficiaries. Since dedications, unlike statues, do not naturally bear honorific connotations, it largely depends on the spread of literacy whether or not the function shows to full advantage. The numerous graffiti-texts in the Nabataean script show that the art of reading and writing was relatively wide-spread among the inhabitants of the Nabataean Empire. Another factor is that the dedicated objects were publicly displayed, although usually the state of preservation does not provide any indication about the original location of the dedication, nor does the inscription. However, if the object of dedication is a temple or altar, then it may be assumed that, given the public character of religion, it was publicly accessible or displayed.

The oldest Nabataean ʿl ḥyy*-inscription*

The oldest inscription containing the formula *ʿl ḥyy* originates from Elusa, an emporium on the road from Petra to Gaza (Cantineau 1978b: 43).[24]

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[24] Dating this inscription, even approximately, is very difficult. On palaeographic grounds it is not later than *c.*150 BC for the script has scarcely developed beyond third century BC forms (Cross 1955: 160, note 25; Starcky 1955: 89; idem 1966: 904 and 929; Hammond 1973: 16; Negev 1976a: 5; Lindner 1980b: 52; Schmitt-Korte 1980: 104 and 107; Bowersock 1983: 18). Hence Aretas might be the same as the character referred to in II Macc. 5: 8, who in 169 BC secured Jason the high-priest. However, in the inscription Aretas bears the title 'king', whereas in II Macc. 5: 8 he is described as *tyrant* of the Nabataeans. In king-lists, this Aretas is generally attributed the figure I so as to indicate that he is the founder of the Nabataean dynasty (Starcky 1955: 88; idem 1966: 904; Hammond 1973: 16; Negev 1976a: 5; Negev 1977: 532; Cantineau 1978a: 8; Lindner 1980b: 52; Schmitt-Korte 1980: 104 and 107; Roschinski 1980: 140; Bowersock 1983: 18). Negev (1977: 546) hesitantly suggests to date the inscription to the reign of Aretas II (*c.*110–96 BC), who is mentioned in Josephus' *Ant. Jud.* XIII, 13, 3.

Cantineau (1978b: 44), followed by Drijvers (1982: 181), definitely favours a date in the time of Aretas II, although he does not provide any decisive argument. Wenning (1987:

> *znh ʾtrʾ*
> *zy ʿbd*
> *ntyrw*
> *ʿl ḥywhy*[25]
> *zy ḥ[r]tt*
> *mlk*
> *nbṭw*
>
> *Translation:* This is the place which Notairu has made for the life of Aretas, king of the Nabataeans.

Compared with others, this inscription shows many irregularities and peculiarities. Firstly, there is no indication about the status of the dedicated object. Secondly, we are very poorly informed about the archaeological conditions in which it was found. Thirdly, no divine recipient is mentioned. Fourthly, the verbs, *qrb*, *to dedicate*, and *ʿbd l*, *to make for*, usually employed for describing the act of making a votive-offering are absent. Finally, if the reading is correct, the description of the dedicated object, which is usually unequivocal, is inconclusive.[26] Like the English *place*, Aramaic *ʾtrʾ* has a broad semantic spectrum. Basically, it refers to a particular spot (DISO: 27), but it may designate an open space, a town, or a building. The spot may be religious or profane in character. Since it is unknown to what kind of spot *ʾtrʾ* refers to here, it has no bearing on the definition of the dedicated object's status, viz. whether or not it is a votive-offering. It is likely, however, that it designates a kind of building, possibly a temple, but, since Elusa was an emporium, its purpose may have been mercantile (Drijvers 1982a: 181).

Whatever the exact status of the dedication, Notairu, the dedicator, acts as a dependant of king Aretas or intends to express allegiance to the Nabataean royal 'house'. The beneficiary's title *king of the Nabataeans* is proudly presented, whereas the dedicator even lacks

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141) joins them on historical grounds, pointing out that Aretas II is the first Nabataean ruler known to have carried the title 'king'.

[25] Cf. Appendix B.

[26] The reading *ʾtrʾ* may be queried on several grounds. An examination of the photographs published by Starcky (1966: 927) and Negev (1977: 545) shows the first "ʾ" to be totally different from the last. Also, the "t" shows a number of divergent traces compared with the others in the inscription. Perhaps, then, apart from the third character, which alternatively may be a "d" since the distinction between "r" and "d" is minimal in Aramaic epigraphy, it is misread.

a patronym. If Notairu acts in his capacity as a representative of Nabataean central authority, then the dedication presents Nabataean power in a far-away place as Elusa, and, subsequently, a personal pledge of allegiance to the Nabataean king. If, on the other hand, Notairu is a member of the local élite who is eager to show his good intentions towards his potential overlords, then the pledge of allegiance to the Nabataean king entails the presentation of Nabataean central authority at a local level. Either way the prime addressee is the local population of Elusa. Whilst the relationship between Notairu and the Nabataean king cannot be specified, the dedication establishes or reinforces ties between dedicator and beneficiary. As a corollary, it demonstrates that Nabataean influence was present in Elusa.

ʿl ḥyy-*inscriptions from Petra*

The second oldest Nabataean inscription with the formula *ʿl ḥyy* originates from Petra. It was found in a rock-cut chamber situated not far from the beginning of the Bab es-Siq, the long gorge leading into the city proper (Starcky 1955: 90; Bowersock 1983: 23). It had been fixed above a niche, so high that Dalman (1912: 100) had to use a ladder to establish the reading of the first line.

> *ʾlk ṣryḥyʾ wgbʾ zy ʿbd ʾṣlḥ br ʾṣlḥ*
> *dnh ṣryḥʾ dy ʿbd ʾṣlḥ br ʾṣlḥ*
> *ldwšrʾ ʾlh mnbtw ʿl ḥyy ʿbdt mlk*
> *nbṭw br ḥrtt mlk nbṭw šnt 1*
>
> *Translation:* These are the chambers and the cistern which Aslah son of Aslah has made. This is the chamber which Aslah son of Aslah has made for Dusares, the god of Manbatu, for the life of Obodas, king of the Nabataeans, son of Aretas, king of the Nabataeans. Year 1.

Although Dalman (1912: 101) suggests a date in the sixties of the first century BC, general consensus places it *c.*90 BC from palaeographic and historical data (Cross 1955: 160f; Starcky 1955: 90; idem 1966: 926; Hammond 1973: 17; Negev 1977: 536; Bowersock 1983: 23, note 45; Wenning 1987: 202). King Aretas (1.4), then, is the second of that name in the Nabataean king-list. Consequently, the gap in time between the execution of this inscription and the previous one may not have been too large. However, apart from establishing the chronological order of the early Nabataean kings, there has been little comment upon this text. Only Dalman (1912: 99ff) and later Cantineau (1978b: 2f) have made any attempt to interpret it in its proper context.

Dalman observed that there is a certain tension between l.1 on the one and ll.2–4 on the other hand. In l.1 the *nota relationis zy* is employed, whereas in ll.2–4 *dy* appears. Furthermore, in l.1 the demonstrative pronoun *ʾlk* is used; in ll.2–4 *dnh*. Since both *zy* and *ʾlk* belong to an older stage of Aramaic than *dy* and *dnh*, Cantineau (1978b: 3) suggests that ll.2–4 were added afterwards. If he is right, and if Aslah son of Aslah in l.1 and in ll.2–4 is one and the same person, then we have an interesting testimony here of a linguistic change that took place within a relatively short period of time. However, if the tradition of naming one's son after one's father subsisted in this family, then the gap in time between l.1 on the one, and ll.2–4 on the other hand may comprise one or several generations. As the latter are fixed to the beginning of the first century BC on account of the date given by the regnant years of Obodas son of Aretas (II), then the former may have been inscribed around the middle of the second century BC. However, in CIS II: 349, usually dated to *c*.69 BC, the relative pronoun *zy* instead of *dy* is still employed. This implies that dating epigraphical texts on account of linguistic features is not always reliable.

Another interesting difference between l.1 and ll.2–4 is that the former only informs us that Aslah son of Aslah had something made, whereas the latter have him dedicating a particular object to Dusares. The verbal expression *ʿbd l* frequently describes the dedication of a votive gift. Furthermore, in ll.2–4 the object of dedication is defined as *dnh ṣryḥʾ* , *this (cult-)chamber*. The same noun, however, appears in l.1 in plural: *ṣryḥyʾ* . In addition, l.1 refers to *gbʾ*, *the cistern* (DISO: 46), not mentioned in ll.2–4. The chamber in which the inscription was found, is flanked by a small rock-cut chamber on either side. Neither of them is described by Dalman as a tomb, although he points out their nearby existence. Dalman (1912: 100) found a pear-shaped cistern in the vicinity leading him to infer that the *nota relationis* in l.1 refers to the two small side-chambers, whereas *dnh* in ll.2–4 refers to the *triclinium*.[27] If ll.2–4 were added at a later stage, it seems that

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[27] Cf. also Wenning (1987: 207).

Aslah son of Aslah had the main chamber and its two side-chambers made as well as the cistern. He recorded the completion of the project in l.1, where the employment of plural *ṣryḥy'* indicates that it comprised a number of chambers. Subsequently, he or possibly his son, or a further descendant, decided to dedicate the entire complex, to which singular *ṣryḥ'* (l.2) refers, to Dusares or he decided to single out the main chamber in order to dedicate it specifically to this deity. In the latter case singular *ṣryḥ'* (l.2) only refers to the room in which the inscription was found. Whichever of the options applies, *ṣryḥ'* (l.2) is obviously presented as a votive-offering. Considering that there is no indication whatsoever that the rooms were used as tombs, and that tombs only very rarely occur as an object of dedication, *ṣryḥ* designates that the hall or chamber was foremost used for religious or cultic purposes.[28] Some confusion about the meaning of *ṣryḥ* might arise here, because many rock-cut tombs were found along the es-Siq. Yet, quite a few votive-offerings have also been found in this gorge. Therefore, this particular rock-cut chamber is not necessarily sepulchral in character (Wenning 1987: 209). Rather, the arrangement of the complex combined with the explicit dedication to a deity, whose statue or idol may have resided in the niche below the inscription, suggests a religious function (Wenning 1987: 202, 204).

Whatever the exact relation may be between the first and the other lines, the latter yields all the characteristics of a genuine *ʿl ḥyy*-dedication: an object of dedication (the rock-cut chamber), a verbal expression from the vocabulary of bringing a votive-offering (*ʿbd l*), a divine recipient (Dusares, the god of Manbatu), a dedicator (Aslah son of Aslah), a beneficiary (Obodas, king of the Nabataeans, son of Aretas, king of the Nabataeans). The information on the social relationship between dedicator and beneficiary is, however, very meagre. It is likely, though, as in the foregoing inscription, that the dedicator is dependent on, or courts the favour of, or intends to subordinate himself to the beneficiary. Whatever his personal motives may have been, as an epitome of his family or clan and as a member of the tribal élite, the dedicator acts as a representative on behalf of a group of people (Dijkstra 1990: 97f). His act has not only a bearing on his personal relationship with the beneficiary, but also on that of the people he represents. This is reinforced if Dusares' modification as *the god of Manbatu*, originally designated the θεὸς πατρῷος of Aslah son of Aslah's family or clan. Dusares ranked as the Nabataean national god, who entertained a special relationship with the royal 'house'. By equating him with or modifying him as the ancestral god of a particular group of people, this group's intent of joining the people that Dusares was believed to guide and unite was expressed (Knauf 1986: 82). Hence, this dedication (re)presents Nabataean authority to the group of people to whom Aslah son of Aslah belongs. In turn, this enhances the observation that the room was primarily used for religious or cultic gatherings of his family or clan (Wenning 1987: 202). In this context one of the prime connotations of the formula *ʿl ḥyy* is pledging and inducing allegiance.

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[28] It may also refer to a hall or chamber for funerary purposes (DISO: 427). Cf. for a tomb as an object of dedication: Drijvers (1981 and 1982a).

Likewise near the Bab es-Siq, at a spot known as el-Madras, a very poorly preserved inscription was found that probably belonged to a sanctuary.

CIS II: 442
[....................]bd/r
[.....]b[..........]td/rb
[....]y/k[....]b[...]ṣytʾ
[................] ʿl ḥyy
ḥrtt[.........]mlk nbṭw
br[..................]b
šnt 16

It concludes with a clearly legible date: year 16. Presumably, this figure refers to the years of rule of the beneficiary: Aretas. A major problem for establishing an accurate date is that there are at least four Nabataean rulers known by the name of Aretas. Since we have no positive proof that Aretas I actually carried the title 'king of the Nabataeans' (Wenning 1987: 141) and since it is doubtful whether Aretas II actually held the throne for at least 16 years, only two serious candidates remain.[29] It is important that CIS reads *br*, *son of*, at the beginning of 1.6 for it suggests that the inscription included Aretas' parentage. However, royal genealogies are very rare in Nabataean epigraphy. Aretas IV's parentage, for instance, is never recorded without dispute. Since Josephus (*Ant. Jud.* XVI: 9, 4) relates that after

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[29] Most commentators hesitate to establish a term for Aretas II's reign (Starcky 1955: 89; idem 1966: 905f; Hammond 1973: 16; Negev 1976a: 5; Negev 1977: 535; Bowersock 1983: 22). Lindner (1980b: 53) estimates his rule at about 24 years: *c.*120–96 BC. Cantineau (1978a: 8) assigns him about 14 years: *c.*110–96 BC. Wenning (1987: 13) considers both options possible.

Obodas II's death in *c*.9 BC a certain Aeneas seized power and subsequently changed his name to Aretas, this is usually held to demonstrate that he was a newcomer on the Nabataean throne. As such, he was not entitled to trace his origin from previous rulers (Starcky 1966: 913; Negev 1976a: 7; Lindner 1980b: 67f; Bowersock 1983: 51f). Significantly, the genealogy of Rabbel II's son, Obodas, the last known heir to the Nabataean throne, which is the longest of a member of the royal family that is extant, goes back precisely to Aretas IV (Yadin 1963: 230). Considering all this, it seems likely that CIS II: 442 should be attributed to the reign of Aretas III Philhellenos, who ruled from *c*.87 to *c*.62 BC (Hammond 1973: 17; Cantineau 1978a: 8; Lindner 1980a: 107; Wenning 1987: 13). Wenning's (1987: 208) dating to the 16th year of Aretas IV, *c*.8 AD, is plausible if *rḥym ʿmh, who loves his people*, is to be read at the beginning of l.6 instead of *br*, *son of*, since this epithet is used exclusively to modify Aretas IV. Nevertheless, a date in the reign of Aretas III is preferable. It may be suggested that the inscription was dedicated shortly after Aslah son of Aslah's dedication of the rock-cut chamber and is contemporaneous with the renovation of the statue of Rabbel I, mentioned in CIS II: 349, which is engraved on a marble socle found in the temenos of the Qasr el-Bint Farʿun, the main temple of Petra (Wenning 1987: 239). It has exactly the same date as CIS II: 442, viz. the 16th year of Aretas. Considering that the *nota relationis zy* instead of *dy* is employed, which indicates an early date, only Aretas III qualifies as the beneficiary of CIS II: 442.

However, excepting the formula, the beneficiary and possibly a date, the inscription is not very instructive. The restoration of l.1 in CIS II: 442 suggests that the object of dedication was a statue or image of Dusares. Yet, the inscription was not found on a socle, but, like the Aslah-inscription, had been fixed to the rear-wall of the main room of the complex. Thus, it is more probable that the sanctuary itself functioned as the object of dedication (Dalman 1912: 101). Since the majority of short memento-texts that were found at this spot were addressed to Dusares, it is suggested that the sanctuary was dedicated to him. Therefore, he probably is the divine recipient in CIS II: 442. Furthermore, one of these memento-texts, CIS II: 443, designates Dusares as *ʾlh mdrsʾ*, *the god of Madras*.[30] CIS II: 442, then, appears to record the dedication of a sanctuary to Dusares *the god of Madras* by a dedicator, whose name is lost, *for the life of* king Aretas III. Practically all the characteristics of the Aslah-inscription are found. The dedicator expresses his allegiance to the Nabataean royal 'house' by dedicating an object to a major Nabataean deity, with whom it presumably entertained good relations, *for the life of* the king. As he acts as an epitome of a group of people, the inscription, (re)presents Nabataean authority over that particular group.

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[30] Cf. Appendix C.

Recently another inscription, yielding the formula *ʿl ḥyy*, was found in Petra (Khairy 1980). With Milik's (1980b) restorations the reading is:

[ ] dy [lbʿšmyn] ʾlh mnkw [ʿl]
[ḥyy ḥrtt] mlk nbṭw rḥm ʿmh wʿl ḥyy šqylt ʾḥth mlkt nbṭ[w]
[wʿl ḥyy] mnkw wʿbdt wrbʾl wpṣʾl wšʿdt bnyhm wʿl ḥyy šqyl[t]
[ʾḥt mnkw] br ḥrtt mlk nbṭw rḥm ʿmh wʿl ḥyy gmlt mlk[t]
[nbṭw wʿl ḥy]y hgrw brth wḥrtt brh br h[nʾktbsʾlw byrḥ]
[ ]yn wʾrbʿ lḥrtt mlk nbṭw rḥm ʿmh

Translation: [ ] of [to Baalshamin] the god of Manku [for the life of Aretas] king of the Nabataeans, who loves his people and for the life of Shoqailat, his 'sister', princess of the Nabatae[ans and for the life of] Manku and Obodas and Rabbel and Fasiel and Saudat, their children, and for the life of Shoqail[at 'sister' of Manku] son of Aretas, king of the Nabataeans, who loves his people and for the life of Gamilat, princ[ess of the Nabataeans and for the life] of Hagiru, her daughter and Aretas, her son, son of Ha[naktabsailu in the month] and four of Aretas, king of the Nabataeans, who loves his people.

Whilst Milik contrives to present a coherent reading, it should be noted that more characters may be missing at each side of the text than he suggests. His restoration at the beginning of 1.4, *ʾḥt mnkw*, is questionable. The last part is plausible, for obviously a son of king Aretas is concerned. Moreover, since at the end of 1.3 a certain Shoqailat is mentioned as the first beneficiary after the king's children and since it is known that Manku was also married to a Shoqailat (Lindner 1980b: 78), it is probable that the beginning of 1.4 described the nature of the relationship between Manku and Shoqailat. However, provided that *ʾḥt* is not an honorific title, *ʾtt*, the wife of, may be more plausible.[31] It would be rather odd when the dedicator first enumerates a number of

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[31] Cf. Appendix D.

> children of Aretas and his wife Shoqailat, then subsequently singles out another one which he does not identify as a child of Aretas, instead qualifying her as a sister of Manku, who is a child of Aretas and Shoqailat. Since Shoqailat (l.3) is modified in relation to Manku, *ʾtt* would be a more plausible restoration. If so, then the list of beneficiaries starts with the king and his wife, their children as well as the wife of the Crown Prince. Then, a daughter of the princely couple, Gamilat, is mentioned. Finally, Hagiru and Aretas are included, so that a neat order of beneficiaries in decreasing importance is created.
>
> It is problematic, though, to decide to whom the suffixes of *brth* and *brh*, qualifying respectively Hagiru and Aretas (l.5), relate. At first sight *brth* modifies Hagiru as a daughter of Gamilat. However, as Gamilat and Hagiru are identified along with king Rabbel II as children of king Malichos or Manku (Cantineau 1978b: 9), Hagiru may be modified here as a daughter of Shoqailat (l.3). In that case, *brth* should perhaps be restored at the beginning of l.5 as well. If so, then Gamilat is modified as a daughter of Shoqailat, entailing that Gamilat and Hagiru are presented as sisters, viz. as children of Manku and Shoqailat. The suffix of *brh*, modifying Aretas (l.5) probably refers to Hagiru. His father is mentioned at the end of l.5. Should the suffix likewise refer to Shoqailat (l.3), which is grammatically possible, then it must be assumed that Shoqailat was polyandrous which is improbable. The list of beneficiaries seems to comprise four generations.
>
> CIS II: 354 allows another option concerning the identity of Hagiru and her son Aretas to be advanced. It mentions a certain Hagiru who is identified as a child of Aretas IV as well as a certain *Aretas son of Hagiru*. Although it violates the neat order of decreasing importance of the beneficiaries, it answers questions as to why Hagiru is not presented as a child of Aretas IV along with his other children. If so, then the list of beneficiaries comprises only three generations.[32]

Unfortunately, this inscription was not found in its original setting. Because of the adaptations to make it fit its second purpose as part of a wall, it is incomplete being damaged at both sides and the first line is entirely missing. Despite the fact that it is one of the longest dedicatory inscriptions ever found in Petra, it only informs us about the beneficiaries, all of whom belong to the Nabataean royal family.

If Milik's (1980b: 25) restoration is correct, then Baalshamin, modified as *the god of Manku*, is the divine recipient.[33] Remarkably, it is this great god from the Hawran who appears in such a capacity here. In Petra, a major prerogative of Dusares, who manifested himself in many different ways, was to act as a divine recipient of dedications.[34] He moreover entertained good relations with the Nabataean royal family. We can only speculate on the dedicator's motives for addressing Baalshamin as a divine recipient. Perhaps he simply originates from the Hawran and, thus, traditionally worships Baalshamin. If so, then he is very eager to pay his respect to the royal 'house'. Although the relationship between dedicator and beneficiaries is not indicated, it may again be assumed that the former belonged to the local élite of a place somewhere in the Hawran. In that case, the dedication is a solemn pledge of allegiance in the Empire's political and religious centre by someone from a peripheral area.

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[32] Cf. my comments on CIS II: 354.

[33] *mnkw* refers to Malichos II (*c*.40–*c*.70 AD). Bowersock (1983: 52), alluding to Starcky (1971: 156f), however, considers it to refer to Malichos I (*c*.30–*c*.8 BC). For him, the

CIS II: 354 (= Cantineau 1978b: 5) displays a similar list of beneficiaries. It was found in the 'Obodas-chapel' situated in a part of the city of Petra called en-Numer. The rear-wall of the chapel has a niche that probably once contained a cult-statue. The inscription is engraved on a protruding architectural feature, perhaps a rafter, at the right of the niche (Starcky 1966: 1015; Wenning 1987: 253). It is unclear whether a direct connection exists between the niche and the inscription.

dnh ṣlmʾ dy ʿbdt ʾlhʾ dy ʿbdw bny ḥnynw br ḥṭyšw br pṭmwn [ ] d[y]lw[t] dwtrʾ ʾlh ḥṭyšw dy bṣhwt pṭmwn ʿmhm ʿl ḥyy ḥrtt mlk nbṭw rḥm ʿm[h wšqylt]
[ʾ]ḥth mlkt nbṭw wmlkw wʿbdt wrbʾl wpṣ ʾl wšʿwdt whgrw bnwhy wḥrtt br hg[rw brt mlkw]
[byrḥ šn]t 29 lḥrtt mlk nbṭw rḥm ʿmh blʾ šl[m]

Translation: This is the statue of the god Obodas, which the sons of Honainu son of Hotaishu son of Petammon have made [ ] close to Dutara, the god of Hotaishu, who dwells in the chapel of Petammon, their ancestor (or: with them), for the life of Aretas, king of the Nabataeans, who loves his people, and Shoqailat his sister, princess of the Nabataeans, and Malku and Obodas and Rabbel and Phasiel and Saudat and Hagiru, his children, as well as Aretas son of Hagi[ru Malku's daughter. In the month of the

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remark in l.1 expresses Aretas IV's policy of relating himself with the Nabataean royal family to justify his claims to the throne. Starcky (1971) suggests a similar interpretation of a very damaged inscription found in Sabra (cf. below). Cf. also Appendix C.

[34] Cf. Appendix C.

> yea]r 29 of the reign of Aretas, king of the Nabataeans, who loves his people. Verily pea[ce]!

Unlike Wenning (1987: 254) and Cantineau (1978b: 139), who consider *ṣhw(t)* respectively to designate a "heiligen Fels" and an "autel", the word should be held to refer to the architectural structure, the chapel or part of it, in which the inscription was found (DISO: 244).

There is a *communis opinio* among commentators that the suffix of *ʿmhm* (1.2) refers to *bny ḥnynw* (1.1) and they consider *ʿmhm* to qualify Petammon as the memorable ancestor who founded the clan. Wenning (1987: 254) describes Petammon as "Ahnherr (Heros Ktistes?)". DISO (216) conceives *ʿm* as "bisaieul", great-grandfather. If the suffix refers to *bny ḥnynw*, Wenning's interpretation is very attractive.[35] However, it may also refer to a number of divinities if it is assumed that one or more deities are mentioned as recipients at the end of 1.1 where the lacuna has space for approximately 16 characters. Furthermore, the text makes no mention of any divine recipient suggesting that they were listed at the end of 1.1. In that case, *dy bṣhwt pṭmwn ʿmhm* modifies *dwtrʾ ʾlh ḥṭyšw* as *who dwells in Petammon's chapel with them*, viz. the deities who act as divine recipients. In this interpretation *ʿm* is a preposition meaning "together with". Depending on how *d[y]lw[t]* (1.2) is interpreted, *ʿmhm* either qualifies *dwtrʾ ʾlh ḥṭyšw* as a θεὸς συνναός or it qualifies the statue of Obodas as such.[36]

Another problem surrounds the conception of parentage in *Aretas son of Hagiru* (1.3). Generally, it is assumed that Hagiru is one of Aretas IV's children. Consequently, Aretas son of Hagiru is a grandson of king Aretas IV. However, Khairy (1980: 22) and Cantineau (1978b: 9) suggest that Hagiru who is reported to have procreated the young Aretas here, may be the daughter of Malichos II (= Manku), Aretas IV's heir to the throne. Thus, instead of *brbrh*, *his grandson*, suggested by CIS and Cantineau (1978b: 5), *brt mlkw*, *Malichos' daughter*, should be restored at the end of 1.3.

blʾ šlm (1.4) is executed in a totally different hand than the foregoing lines and is a later addition.

The object of dedication is a statue of the god Obodas.[37] Although divine recipients may have been mentioned at the end of 1.1, it is also conceivable that the god whose statue acts as an object of dedication simultaneously is its divine recipient. There may not have been a large time difference—at most 15 years—between the execution of this inscription and that reproduced by Khairy (1980: 22). Bearing this in mind, it is conspicuous that six children of Aretas IV are enumerated here, whereas Khairy (1980: 22) counts only five. Our knowledge of the composition of the Nabataean royal 'house' and its hierarchical structure is very scant. Also, it is unknown whether the practice of counting the king's children among the beneficiaries of a dedication was arbitrary or based on custom. Nevertheless, Khairy (1980: 22) was probably executed prior to CIS II: 354 which, on this basis, should be dated to the 14th or 24th year of Aretas IV.

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[35] Cf. also the entries *ʿm*1 and *ʿm*2 in Koehler and Baumgartner (1958).

[36] Cf. for the interpretation of *dylwt*: Rosenthal (1974: 37).

[37] Obodas is a genuine god and not a deified king (cf. Appendix E).

Identifying the dedicators is beset with difficulties. There are two lines of approach for interpreting their description, which, moreover, are not mutually exclusive. The designation *bny ḥnynw* (l.1) may be either classificatory indicating a clan or sub-tribe, or descriptive. If the former applies, then the designations *br ḥṭyšw* (l.1) and *br pṭmwn* (l.1) stand for groups of people or clans instead of persons, particularly if *ḥṭyšw* in *br ḥṭyšw* (l.1) and *ḥṭyšw* in *ʾlh ḥṭyšw* (l.2) refer to one and the same entity. In that case the *bny ḥnynw* are a part of the *bny ḥṭyšw*, which in turn is a subdivision of the *bny pṭmwn*. This interpretation of the genealogical data in l.1 sheds an interesting light on the remarks about the god *dwtrʾ* (l.2) which states that as *the god of Hotaishu he resides in Petammon's chapel*. The subordination of the *bny ḥṭyšw* to the *bny pṭmwn*, genealogically expressed in l.1, is ritually reinforced in l.2. The clan-god has taken up residence in the sanctuary founded by the tribal ancestor to underscore ritually the social and possibly also the political unity. If, on the other hand, the designation *bny ḥnynw* (l.1) is descriptive, then Honainu is the physical father. The catchword is not 'clan' but 'family', suggesting that over and above a unity implied by the concept 'clan', the authors of this dedication present themselves as individuals who wish to establish or reinforce their personal relationship with the royal family. It is conspicuous, then, that they nevertheless present themselves as a unity in not communicating any personal names. Whilst divergent conceptions emerge from the distinct lines of approach to the genealogical data of l.1, as members of the tribal élite, the *bny ḥnynw* undoubtedly represent one or more groups of people.[38] Unfortunately, neither line of approach throws any further light on the relationship between dedicators and beneficiaries. As members of the tribal élite, the *bny ḥnynw* intend to establish or reinforce their ties with central authority. Conspicuously, the act is executed in Petra, the political and religious centre of the Empire.

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[38] Cf. for the dynamic aspects of genealogies in tribal or segmentary society in the ancient Near East: Dijkstra (1990: 93).

The identification of the god Obodas, whose statue or image is erected, with one of the kings of that name, usually king Obodas II (*c*.30–*c*.8 BC), who on that account must have been deified, is dubious.[39] The god Obodas, on the basis of his name, may have entertained a special relationship with the Nabataean royal 'house', contributing to the impact of the act and the implementation of the dedicators' objectives. As a sanctuary, Petammon's chapel was publicly accessible and many of the visitors to it probably were members of the clan or tribe founded by that same Petammon. The inscription reminds them of the good intentions which the tribal élite cherished towards the royal family and which they are also supposed to entertain.

The city of Petra has yielded three more dedications with inscriptions containing the formula *ʿl ḥyy* which date from the times of Aretas IV's successors. They all are badly mutilated, but the inscriptions confirm our conception of the role of these dedications in public life and that of the social relationships they record.

A fragment engraved on a marble slab originating from a structure identified as a *temenos* remains from the reign of Malichos II (*c*.40–*c*.70 AD). The beneficiaries belong to the royal family. The object(s) of dedication was made of gold (Starcky and Strugnell 1966: 244).

[ ]ʾ wtry kmy dhbʾ wk[ ]
[ ]tbqr ʿl ḥyy mnkw [ ]
[ ]wšqylt mlky nb[ṭw]

Translation: [ ] and two . . . of gold and [ ] . . . for the life of Malku [ ] and Shoqailat princes (?) of the Naba[taeans].[40]

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[39] Cf. Appendix E.

[40] Cf. for *kmy* (1.1) and *tbqr* (1.2): Starcky and Strugnell (1966: 246f). The translation of *mlky* (1.3) depends on how the lacuna in ll.2–3 is interpreted. The text suggests that here members of the royal family were enumerated, so that *mnkw* is not modified as a Nabataean king, but instead is the first of a number of persons that are qualified as Nabataean royalty (cf. Appendix D). If so, then the dedication might date from Aretas IV's reign. It is more probable, though, that Manku was modified as the Nabataean king followed by an enumeration of other members of the royal family, who male and female alike, are qualified as Nabataean princes. Possibly, the last character of *mlky* should be read as "t".

A very interesting, but very mutilated inscription was found at a site called el-Hubta. For one reason or another the stone carrying the inscription had been moved from elsewhere (Wenning 1987: 277). The last line, which probably contained the date, in terms of the years of reign of the ruling Nabataean king, suggests that it belongs to the reign of Rabbel II. Part of his exclusive epithet, *who brings life and deliverance to his people*, is still legible. Whilst Rabbel II is the prime beneficiary, all beneficiaries belong to the royal family (ll.6–12). The divine recipient is mentioned in l.5. The text is recorded by Cantineau (1978b: 9).

[ ]ʾ dy ʾ [ ]
[w]brh [d]y [mn] qbytʾ hw w[ ] ʿ[b]dʾlgʾ
br ʿbdʾlgʾ dy [m]n swdy w[ ] wbnwhy
[w]whbʾlhy wrbʾl w[ ] wwhbʾlhy
[w]bn[w]h[y l]ʾlh ṣʿbw ʾlhʾ dy [b]ʾṣl ḥbtʾ ʿl ḥy[y][41]
[r]bʾl [m]lkʾ mlk nbṭw dy ʾḥyy wš[y]zb ʿ[m]h [wʿ]l ḥyy gmlt whgrw
ʾḥwt[h m]lkt nbṭw bny mlkw
[mlk]ʾ mlk nbṭw br ḥrtt mlk nbṭw rḥm ʿmh
[wʿl ḥy]y qšmʾl wšʿ[w]dt ʾḥwth mlkt nbṭw wʿ[l]
[ḥyy m]lk[w] bn[y] rbʾl wgmlt whgrw [ ]
[m]lkt nb[ṭw wʿl ḥ]yy qšmʾ[l]
[rbʾl mlk n]bṭw dy ʾ[ḥ]yy wšyzb
[ʿmh]

Translation: [ ] that [ ] and his son who originate from Qabita, he and [ ] Abdalga son of Abdalga who originate from Soueida(?) and [ ] and his sons, and Wahbellahai and Rabbel and [ ] and Wahbellahai and his sons for the god Saabu, the god who resides in [ ] of Hubta for the life of king Rabbel, king of the Nabataeans, who brings life and deliverance to his people, and for the life of Gamilat and Hagiru, his sisters, princesses of the Nabataeans, the children of king Malichos, the king of the Nabataeans, son of Aretas, king of the Nabataeans, who loves his people, and for the life of Qoshmail and Shaudat, his sisters, princesses of the Nabataeans, and for the life of [ ] Malichos, the children of Rabbel and Gamilat and Hagiru [ ] princesses of the Nabataeans, and for the life of Qoshmail [ ] king

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[41] Cf. Winnett-Reed (1970: 157f) and DFD (211f).

> Rabbel, king of the Nabataeans, who brings life and deliverance to his people.[42]

Our attention is especially drawn by some pecularities in ll.1–4. The apposition *dy mn qbytʾ* relates to an unknown dedicator and his son (ll.1–2); *dy mn swdy* modifies another dedicator, viz. Abdalga son of Abdalga (ll.2–3). Most probably they name otherwise unknown towns or villages, although *swdy* might allude to Soueida in the Hawran (Cantineau 1978b: 10; DFD: 212). Conspicuously, the remains of ll.1–4 suggest multiple dedicators who do not all belong to one single family and do not all originate from the same place. However, some of them are related by ties of kinship, especially the father-son relation.

The fact that the dedicators apparently hail from different towns or villages indicates that their main objectives for dedicating something in the religious and political centre of the Empire does not reside in strengthening a local élite-family's ties with the royal house. If this motive might be considered, then a number of families have joined their efforts. It is more likely, though, that the dedicators constitute a cult-association, perhaps to the god Saabu.[43] If it can be assumed that the royal family was accustomed to sponsor such religious and social associations, the dedicators seek to express their gratitude for royal involvement with their cause, or show themselves engaged in fund-raising.

Another inscription, dated to the reign of Rabbel II, was found at a site called Qattar ed-Der in Petra (Milik 1958: 246ff). Wenning (1987: 262) describes the site as "Tropfheiligtum", indicating its use as a sanctuary. The inscription is engraved in a rock-wall next to a niche containing two baetyles, aniconic representations of deities. Both figures are reproduced geometrically; one being oblong and almost resembling a pole. The other, bearing a cross of Lorraine, is almost square (Milik 1958: pl.VIII). The inscription refers either to the entire representation or to one of the baetyls.

dnh mṣbʾ
dy bṣrʾ d[y]
[ʿ]bd [ ]lhy b[r]

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[42] Cf. for the translation of royal titles: Appendix D; and for the divine recipient (l.5): Appendix C.

[43] Cf. for other examples mentioning cult-associations as dedicators: Chapter 5.

[ʿ]l ḥyyh
wḥ[yy]
rbʾl mlk nbṭ
w

Translation: This is the image of Bostra, which [ ]ellahai son of [ ] has made for the life of himself and the life of Rabbel, king of the Nabataeans.[44]

The dedicator does not explicitly name a divine recipient who, from the dimensions of the lacuna, may not have been mentioned at all. In this instance, the act of dedicating is understated and the baetyls may simultaneously act as divine recipients.

Because of the deteriorated state, it is impossible to identify the dedicator. On the other hand ll.6–7 leave no doubt that Rabbel II, deprived of his epithet, *who brings life and deliverance to his people*, is a beneficiary. However, the dedicator himself is the prime beneficiary. Remarkably, they are the only ones, with neither the dedicator's family and relatives nor other members of the royal family being listed. The inscription may intend to highlight the personal relationship between dedicator and king or, possibly, the relationship between king and deity dictated the listing of the king as a beneficiary. Rabbel II entertained good relations with the city of Bostra, here apparently personified as a deity (Milik 1958: 247f).

The execution of the inscription suggests that the dedicator confined himself to the most important information. He and Rabbel may be considered as epitomes of their families, although Rabbel II may be mentioned simply as a beneficiary out of custom. Finally, the dedicator may aim to establish royal approval for his dedication by inciting Rabbel to act as a patron of the sanctuary or the cult-association it housed.

ʿl ḥyy-*inscriptions from the Nabataean Empire*

Although Petra was the religious and political heart of the Empire, inscriptions from other locations also list members of the royal family as the prime or sole beneficiaries. They essentially convey the same message as those from Petra, (re)presenting central authority to subjects living in remote areas. The dedicators, as representatives of the local élite, simultaneously seek to enhance their status by means of a dedication. In their pledge of allegiance, the élite sets an example for the local population. Meanwhile, for reasons of *philotimia* the dedications paradoxically stimulate both competition and corporate feeling among the local élite and consequently, the local population may rejoice in a proliferation of commodities.

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[44] Cf. for the interpretations of *mṣbʾ dy bṣrʾ*: Milik (1958: 247f).

In es-Sabra, a small site along a caravan-track south-west of Petra, an inscription was found on a slab of stone. The slab was reused, and because of this only the left part of the inscription remains (Starcky 1971: 151f).

[ʾlh q]ṣryʾ dy bnh
[b]r dydwrs rb pršyʾ
[ ] ʿl ḥyy ḥrtt
[mlk nb]ṭw whgrw mlktʾ
[ ]mnkw mlk nbṭw
[ ]šh wdy bnwhy
[byrḥ šb]ṭ šnt 18

Translation: [ ] the camp that has built [ ] son of Diodorus, the commander of the cavalry [ ] for the life of Aretas [king of the Naba]taeans and Hagiru, the princess [ ] Manku, king of the Nabataeans [ ] and of his children. [In the month Sheba]t of the 18th year.

There is no trace of a divine recipient. The use of the verb *bnh*, *to build*, implies that a major object has been dedicated, yet its identification is nevertheless surrounded by difficulties (Starcky 1971: 154f). Starcky suggests that the word immediately before the *nota relationis dy* (1.1) should be read as *qṣryʾ*, Aramaic for Latin *castra*, (*military*) *camp* (DISO: 126).[45] The dedicator is described as *commander of the cavalry*, intimating that he entertained a close relationship with the king and had a camp built that probably served as an object of dedication. Despite the reservations of Wenning (1987: 93f), es-Sabra is traditionally held to have functioned as a military encampment.

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[45] Starcky (1971: 155) refers to CIS II: 336 as yielding the same word in the singular. Usually it is translated as a *small room* or *cella* (DISO: 262). It is interesting too that in CIS II: 336 the object is dedicated to a deity. It should be noted, though, that recently Beyer and Livingstone (1987: 291) have suggested the reading *ḥgrʾ* meaning "das Geweihte" instead of *qṣrʾ* for CIS II: 336.

The beneficiaries, indicated by name and title, belong to the royal 'house', although their identity is enigmatic. Is Aretas III (*c*.87–*c*.62 BC) the prime beneficiary or is it Aretas IV (*c*.8 BC–*c*.40 AD)? As Starcky (1971: 155ff) has demonstrated, this is a major difficulty because the epithets which exclusively belong to each Nabataean king are lacking.[46] Starcky's statement that the arguments in favour of Aretas IV are more plausible than those in favour of Aretas III, may allow the inscription to be dated to *c*.10 AD.

The employment of the formula *ʿl ḥyy* suggests that whoever reads the text is incited to pay his respects to the Nabataean royal family. In urging such an attitude on the part of the reader, the dedicator shows his allegiance to his legitimate overlords. The inscription from Elusa is very similar in this respect.[47] In the absence of a divine recipient, the status of the beneficiaries and the relationship between dedicator and beneficiaries are unusually highlighted. As a corollary the semantic value of *ʿl ḥyy*, *for the life of* approximates that of *lyqr*, *in honour of*.

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[46] A major problem exists over the fact that *mnkw* (l.5) is qualified as *king of the Nabataeans*, whereas Aretas (l.3) probably carries the same title. Usually it is reserved for one living male member of the royal family at the time. If *mnkw* is credited as such and if it is assumed that Malichos II is meant here—one of his daughters is called Hagiru (cf. Appendix D)—, it means that Aretas IV already had passed away and, consequently the inscription should be dated to the 18th year of Malichos II or *c*.58 AD. However, this is unlikely since it is unusual to mention a deceased king as the prime beneficiary. If Aretas III and Malichos I are meant a similar argument applies. The most plausible solution is that Aretas IV and Malichos I are referred to since it is not uncommon for titles and epithets of royal ancestors to stand in full glory in a reigning king's genealogy. As Starcky observed, the problem then is how to link Aretas IV with Malichos I, because Aretas IV seems to have been a newcomer on the Nabataean throne (cf. Negev 1976a: 7) and there is no sign of Obodas II, his immediate predecessor. However, a lot more of the inscription may be missing than Starcky suggests. If so, then Obodas II may have been mentioned in the missing part. Starcky suggests that, as it would only be natural for l.5 to modify *hgrw mlktʾ* at the end of l.4, we are dealing here with a cunning sample of incorporating Aretas IV in the official genealogy of the Nabataean royal house through a relative of Obodas II's predecessor Malichos I. Bowersock (1983: 52) believes to have found another example of such a strategy in Khairy (1980: 22) (cf. above; cf. for an alternative of Bowersock's interpretation: Appendix C).

Finally, despite the fact that Starcky pertinently rejects the idea, it still is possible that the designation *mlk*, like *mlkt*, was used also as a title, not just for the reigning king but for the Crown Prince. The Nabataean kings may have practiced a sort of co-regency with their predestined successors and if this is the case, we may be dealing with Malichos II and Aretas IV.

[47] Cf. above p. 46.

Two dedicatory inscriptions with the formula were found in the ruins of the temple in Khirbet et-Tannur, a site north of Petra and just to the south-east of the Dead Sea. The sanctuary was built on a hill at the confluence of two rivers and is accessible by a single artificial ascent only (Savignac 1937: 401ff; Negev 1977: 605). It was dedicated to the Edomite deity Qos who probably is identified as *the one from Harawa*, which in all likelihood should be linked with the arid and sun-burnt conditions of the site (Milik 1958: 238). Neither of the inscriptions was found *in situ*. Both are engraved on a bloc of limestone. The first, complete and written within a border, is dated to the 2nd year of Aretas IV or *c*.7 BC by Savignac (1937: 405 and pl.IX) whose reading was improved by Starcky (Savignac and Starcky 1957: 215).

dy bnh nṭyrʾl br
zydʾl rʾš ʿyn lʿbn ʿl ḥyy ḥrtt
mlk nbṭw rḥm ʿmh wḥyy ḥldw
ʾtth bšnt 2

Translation: Which has built Notairel son of Zaidel supervisor of the spring Laaban for the life of Aretas, king of the Nabataeans, who loves his people and the life of Huldu his wife. In the year 2.

The other is badly damaged, but is also written within a border (Savignac 1937: 410).

[dy] bnh nṭyrʾl br
[zydʾ]l ʿl ḥyy ḥr[tt]
[mlk nbṭw rḥm] ʿm[h]
[ ]

Translation: [Which] has built Notairel son of [Zaid]el for the life of Are[tas, king of the Nabataeans, who loves] his peo[ple] [ ].

In both inscriptions the first preserved line seems indeed to be the opening line with the dedicator apparently presuming that the object of dedication is obvious. Therefore, the beginning of 1.1 may almost be translated as *this has made*. The use of the verb *bnh*, *to build*, suggests that we are dealing with building-inscriptions, not perhaps of the entire structure, but of certain parts. This would explain why two almost identical texts were unearthed (Starcky 1968: 211).

However, the dimensions of the borders containing the inscriptions, respectively *c.*36 × *c.*15 cm and *c.*25 × *c.*20 cm do not uphold the suggestion that structures of some proportions are concerned. No mention is made of a divine recipient, although the find-spot, a temple dedicated to Qos, suggests that this Edomite deity acted as such.

Since the dedicator is described as *supervisor of the spring Laaban*, he must have been a member of the local élite. Archaeological evidence from the site has yielded the remnants of a temple with its situation suggesting that water was abundant nearby. Since water-places were of the utmost importance for caravans, the office of *supervisor of the spring* may have had imperial significance as well. If so, then, it covered both religious and civilian-administrative matters.[48] Again, the beneficiaries belong to the royal family.

> Having reassembled and restored some epigraphic remains published by Negev (1961: 127ff), Naveh (1967: 188f) manages to present another Nabataean text with the formula *ʿl ḥyy*. The material originates from Oboda, a site in the Negev-desert. It is dated to the second year of Aretas IV. Compared with the inscription from Khirbet et-Tannur that does not mention any children of Aretas and Huldu, Naveh's reconstructed text counts three. This discrepancy raises serious doubts, even though Naveh produces a very neat dedicatory text. However, his conclusions are based more on his interpretation of the texts he alludes to when justifying his restorations rather than on the actual remains. For example, his conclusion of a cult-statue of the god Obodas in Oboda should be rejected as it is based on the restoration of l.1 using CIS II: 354 originating from Petra. The remaining text does not allow anything more to be inferred than that an votive gift is concerned; that Aretas IV is referred to since his epithet occurs in l.2; that three of his children are mentioned; and that it should be dated to the second year of his reign. This is all dependent on the piecing together of the fragments. Indeed, the height of the characters engraved on each piece are more or less similar, but the differences in thickness of the various pieces of marble bearing them raises serious doubts, especially in the joining of l.3 to ll.1–2 (Naveh 1967: 189). Negev (1961: 130) also remarks that there is a slight difference in colour between the marble in which most pieces of the inscription are engraved and that of the end of Naveh's l.4. Naveh's efforts yield:

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[48] Epigraphical remains suggest that a similar office was operative in relation to the source Efqa in Palmyra (Savignac and Starcky 1957: 216f).

[dnh ṣlmʾ dy ʿbdt ʾlh]ʾ dy qrb šʿyw br [ ]
[ʿl ḥyy ḥrtt mlk nbṭ]w rḥm ʿmh wʿ[l ḥyy (ḥldw ʾntth) wḥyy]
ʿbdt wpṣʿl wšʿwdt bny ḥrtt
[byrḥ] šnt 2 [lḥr]tt mlk
[nbṭw rḥm ʿmh šl]m

Translation: [This is the image of the god Obodas] that has offered Shayu son of [for the life of Aretas king of the Nabatae]ans, who loves his people and [for the life of (Huldu, his wife) and the life of] Obodas and Phasiel and Shaudat, children of Aretas. [In the month] of the 2nd year of Aretas, king of the [Nabataeans, who loves his people. Pea]ce!

Another inscription, dating from the 17th year of the reign of king Rabbel II (*c*.87 AD), was found in Iram, on the caravan-route between Petra and the Gulf of Aqaba, which ranked amongst the major Nabataean centres. A military camp and a necropolis were found next to a temple (Negev 1977: 586ff). The site is strewn with springs and water-sources; these probably being the prime cause for its development into a major centre. The inscription is engraved on a slab of stone with a rough surface measuring 87 × 62 × 15 cm that had been erected at the rim of the main water-source (Savignac 1933: 407). Although it has been valued as an important inscription for dating the dedication of the temple of Iram, it lacks, apart from the wording and the style of the characters, monumental features. Therefore, its significance should not be over-estimated. It is uncertain whether it was found *in situ*. Savignac (1933: 408) and Starcky (1966: 979) render the following text:

[ ] dy bʾrm ʿ[l ḥyy rbʾl mlkʾ mlk nbṭw]
[dy ʾḥyy w]šyzb ʿmh wʿl ḥyy gmlt wh[gyrw] w[ ]š[ʾḥwth]
mlkwt nbṭw wʿl ḥyy ḥrtt wš[ ] bnwhy wʿl ḥyy ḥldw [ ]
[ ]rw wʿl ḥyy qšmʾl wšʿwdt ʾḥwth byrḥ ʾyr šnt [17]
lrbʾl mlkʾ mlk nbṭw dy ʾḥyy wšyzb ʿmh

Translation: [ ] that is in Iram for [the life of king Rabbel, the king of the Nabataeans, who brings life and] deliverance to his people and for the life of Gamilat and Ha[giru] and [his sisters], princesses of the Nabataeans, and for the life of Aretas and [ ] his children and for the life of Huldu [ ] and for the life of Qoshmael and Shaudat, his sisters. In the month Ayyir of the [17th] year of king Rabbel, the king of the Nabataeans, who brings life and deliverance to his people.

Iram gained importance at the end of the first century AD (Wenning 1987: 101). The inscription, however, only presents the date and the names of the beneficiaries. It is as though the dedicator wishes to underscore his 'nationalistic' inclinations and to acknowledge that Nabataean power is well established in the region of Iram.

A badly mutilated inscription originating from Hegra renders, besides the formula *ʿl ḥyy*, no more than a couple of names of the dedicators (Winnett and Reed 1970: 157).

[dnh m]sgdʾ dy ʿbdw tymw br šbw wtymw br
[ ] wʿbdrbʿl br šbw wḥlpw
[br lʾlh ṣ]ʾbw ʾlh[ʾ]
[ʿ]l ḥy[y]
ʿbdt [ ]

Translation: [This is the san]ctuary that have made Taimu son of Shabu and Taimu son of [ ] and Abdrabbel son of Shabu and Halifu [son of for the god S]aabu the god [for] the life of [ ] Obodas [ ]

If the restorations of Winnett and Reed are correct, then with the use of the verb *ʿbd*, *to make*, and the preposition *l*, *for*, it is stated that the god Saabu is the divine recipient of a *msgd*. This word either designates a "lieu de d'adoration", a sanctuary, or a cult-object meant to venerate the deity to whom it is permanently dedicated, i.e. an image, statue or stele (DISO: 160). Winnett and Reed (1970: 158) seem to be convinced that the first meaning applies here, although they do not relate the circumstances in which the inscription was found.

The patronyms are given for two of the four dedicators. However, because of the lacunae it is impossible to establish their mutual relationship, although the two whose names are qualified by patronyms have the same parentage. Since they both are designated as son of Shabu, it is tempting to presume that they are brothers even though they occupy the first and third places respectively in the list of dedicators. Now, as the first, *Taimu son of Shabu*, and the second (whose patronym, like that of the fourth, is lost) bear the same name, it is improbable that they both descended from one and the same person. Since it was customary for a son to be named after his grandfather, the initiative for this dedication may have been taken by two cousins, each of which secured the assistance of his, or one of his, brothers in bearing the costs of a joint enterprise. If this is the case, then, like CIS II: 354 from Petra, this inscription presents the establishment of a sanctuary by a clan or sub-tribe by means of a joint venture.

Because of the condition of the inscription, the beneficiaries are unknown. Two options present themselves here. The dedicators themselves may have been amplified using immediate kin, or the Nabataean king and other members of the royal family may have acted in this capacity. Indeed, the latter is often listed as a beneficiary of dedications consisting of sanctuaries or other sizeable structures for religious and ideological purposes. Moreover, the name Obodas which runs in the royal family is still legible at the beginning of l.5. Thus, king Obodas may be a beneficiary. On the other hand, *Obodas* (l.5) may indicate the king by whose years of reign the inscription is dated. In that case, the beneficiaries may have comprised the dedicators themselves and their immediate kin. If the former applies, then the dedication is very similar to the ones discussed so far. If the latter applies, then the dedication serves to reinforce ties of kinship. Simultaneously, the fact that they are mentioned as beneficiaries intimates whose wants are initially met when a cult-statue or image or temple is erected or built.

Kraeling (1938: 371f) claims that a Nabataean-Greek bilingual having the formula and mentioning king Rabbel II as a beneficiary was found in the city of Gerasa. However, little can be said because the inscription is badly damaged. It probably belonged to a statue, but the identity of the person represented is unknown.

ʿl-ḥyy-*inscriptions from beyond the borders of the Empire*

Two Nabataean inscriptions were found far beyond the borders of the former Nabataean Empire. They are nevertheless dated to its heyday. The bilingual text, which is badly damaged, originates from Milete at the west-coast of Asia Minor. The fragments record Syllaios, the dissident vizier of king Obodas II (*c*.30–*c*.8 BC) making a dedication (Cantineau 1978b: 45):

> *šly ʾḥ mlkʾ br tym[ ]*
> *mdtʾ ʿl ḥyy ʿbdt mlkʾ byrḥ ṭ[bt]*

[Συλλ]αιος ἀδελφὸς βασιλ[έως]
ἀνέθηκεν Διὶ Δου[σάρει]

Translation: Nabataean: Shullai, the king's brother, son of Taim[ ] for the life of king Obodas. In the month Te[bet].

Greek: [Syll]aios, the king's brother, [ ] has dedicated to Zeus Du[sares].

The Greek reveals a dedication in the true sense of the word. Whatever the object of dedication may have been, Dusares, the Nabataean 'national' deity, acted as a divine recipient.[49] Although no exact date is supplied, the combination of the names Syllaios, who is described as *the king's brother*, and Obodas, who is described as *the king*, suggest that the dedication belongs to the end of the first century BC. Moreover, both Josephus (*Ant. Jud.* XVI: 284) and Strabo (*Geography* XVI: 4, 24) relate that at the end of Obodas II's reign, his vizier Syllaios travelled to Rome. Presumably his aim was to win Augustus for his cause, but the final result was that he was beheaded. If the dedication indeed was made on his journey to Rome, it should be dated to *c.*10 BC.

Since it is related that shortly afterwards Obodas died, and that this sad event was associated with Syllaios' craving for power in a way that made him responsible for the assassination of Obodas, commentators tend to consider this dedication to be a hypocritical expression of the good intentions Syllaios fostered towards his master, the king of the Nabataeans. As acts of dedication like this usually express allegiance, Syllaios' contribution is held to be an example of wilfully abusing a well-established cultural pattern. Such a conception is mainly prompted by Syllaios' bad reputation. Although it is possible, there is in fact no decisive proof that Syllaios was on his way to Rome when he made the dedication. Thus, his presumed wicked intent can not be substantiated.[50] He may well have visited Milete on a previous occasion, since he was king Obodas II's vizier and the Nabataeans had great commercial interests throughout the ancient world. It is conceivable that, like a 'minister of foreign affairs', he had been dispatched to Milete in order to promote Nabataean interests long before he undertook his journey to Rome. It moreover may have belonged to proper diplomacy to leave a memento of his visit, either as a token of appreciation of extant ties between his people and the inhabitants of Milete or as a reinforcement of the bonds linking Nabataean representatives residing in Milete with their homeland, or both. Although classical sources almost unanimously and very eagerly depict him in negative terms, Bowersock (1983: 47ff) has hesitantly advanced the idea that Syllaios might represent a 'classical' victim of circumstances. However, under present conditions it is obviously very hard to establish the exact nature of the relationship between dedicator and beneficiary.[51]

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[49] *Aoristus activi* of ἀνατίθημι, *to dedicate* is widely used in Greek epigraphy as the equivalent of *perfectum peʿal* of *ʿbd l* and *perfectum paʿel* of *qrb* in Aramaic.

[50] Cf. Appendix A.

Another Nabataean inscription containing the formula *ʿl ḥyy* found far away from the homeland originates from Puteoli in the vicinity of Naples on the west-coast of Italy: CIS II: 158:

> *dʾ mḥrmtʾ [dy ḥ]dtw [   ]t wʿly nḥšʾ [   ]*
> *[   ]l[   ] wmrty dy mtqrʾ zbdt [   ]*
> *[   ]ṣy ṣydw br ʿbdt mn dylh ʿl ḥyy ḥrtt mlk n[bṭw wdy]*
> *[ḥ]ldw ʾtth mlkt nbṭw wdy bnyhm byrḥ ʾb šnt 14 [   ]*
> *[   ] ʾḥr zmnʾ bny mḥrmtʾ qdmytʾ dy ʿbd bnhbl br bm[   ]*
> *[bšnt] 8 lmlkw mlk nbṭw yhbw bgw mḥrmtʾ dʾ*
>
> *Translation:* This is the sanctuary that have restored [   ] and Ali, the bronze-worker (or: and the upper part of bronze) [   ] and Marty who is also known as Zabdata [   ] Saidu son of Obodas at his own expense for the life of Aretas, king of the Nabataeans, and that of Huldu, his wife, princess of the Nabataeans, and that of their children. In the month Ab of the 14th year [   ] after the time (?) in which the first sanctuary (or: the sanctuary in front) was built, that has made Benhabel son of [In the] 8th year of Malichos, king of the Nabataeans, they have bestowed the interior of this sanctuary.

The inscription is engraved on a stele and it reports a number of building-activities on a Nabataean sanctuary in the course of the first century AD. As the text shows some substantial lacunae, its original sense is sometimes hard to grasp. Apparently, a number of people renewed or restored the building or certain parts of it. Because of the poor state of preservation, the identity of the dedicators enumerated in ll.1–3 remains for the greater part obscure. It is explicitly stated, however, that at least one of them accomplished the enterprise at his own expense.[52] The beneficiaries all belong to the Nabataean royal family, viz. Aretas, the king, his wife, and their children. Despite the absence of his usual epithet, it is well-known that Aretas IV's first wife was called Huldu. Whilst the initial letter is restored, the remaining characters at the beginning of l.4 suggest that she is meant here. On this basis, the date at the end of l.4 denotes Aretas IV's years of reign and corresponds with *c*.6 AD. By restoring *lmlkwth*, *of his reign*, at the end of l.4, the editor of CIS reinforces such an interpretation.

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[51] Cf. Appendix D.

In addition, it is difficult to establish the proper perspective of ll.5–6, especially since the appearance in l.6 of another date suggests that the inscription refers to two different events. It is tempting to identify *Malichos, king of the Nabataeans* as Malichos II, Aretas IV's successor. The absence of his personal epithet *mlkʾ*, *the king*, is not decisive for Aretas' personal epithet (*rḥym ʿmh*, *who loves his people*) fails as well. Ll.5–6 appear to relate a later embellishment of the sanctuary; in about 48 AD. On the other hand, it may refer to Malichos I (*c*.56–*c*.30 BC). If so, then the date corresponds with *c*.48 BC. Assuming that the inscription was executed in its entirety, its date depends on how the last two lines are interpreted. If they to refer to Malichos I, then it should be attributed to the 14th year of Aretas IV or *c*.6 AD. If, on the other hand, they refer to Malichos II, then it belongs to his eighth year or *c*.48 AD.

Despite the fact that the text does not explicitly mention a divine recipient, the sanctuary probably was inhabited by one or more Nabataean deities. Its erection on Italian soil may be explained by the presence of a Nabataean 'colony', consisting of commercial entrepreneurs or the personnel of a trading-post. However, aside from motives incited by piety or tradition, it is hard to grasp why the dedicators listed the Nabataean royal family as beneficiaries. In what way did this serve their interests? The public able to read Aramaic in Puteoli was probably confined to the Nabataean community residing there. Perhaps, then, motives of piety or tradition were accompanied by sentimental inducements to create a powerful symbol that acted as a constant reminder of the native roots of the dedicators each time the inscription was read and the king's name was cited. In Antiquity reading was always done aloud. Hence the inscription and the sanctuary reassure the identity of a group of people with a Nabataean background living abroad. However, it is not a pledge of allegiance or a manifestation of Nabataean power.

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[52] The phrase *mn dylh* probably equals the expression *mn kysh*, *from his own pocket.*

Inscriptions with beneficiaries other than royalty

Nabataean epigraphy occasionally yields inscriptions having the formula or a similar expression that do not mention the Nabataean king and other members of the royal family as prime beneficiaries. A very interesting example was recently published by Beyer and Livingstone (1987: 291). It originates from Taima north-east of Hegra in the Hejaz and it is engraved on a basin of stone. On palaeographic grounds the editors date the inscription to the beginning of the first century BC. Although the editors omit to relate the archaeological conditions in which it was found, the text clearly states that the object was *offered to the highest goddess Manawah.*

> *ḥgrʾ dy qrb ʾḥbwl whw pny ḥṭm*
> *h lmnwh ʾlht ʾlhtʾ lḥyy npšh wnp*
> *š ʾḥrth lʿlm*
>
> *Translation:* The dedication that Ahibol has offered, who is a protégé of Hatamah, to the highest goddess Manawah for the life of his soul and the soul of his offspring in eternity.

The concept *npš*, *soul*, refers to a creature's essence, a person's individuality or personality (Koehler-Baumgartner 1958: 627). Therefore, ll.2–3 have the same purport as *lḥyyh wʾḥrth lʿlm*, *for the life of himself and his offspring in eternity*. The former is an elaborate, perhaps archaic, version of the latter, but essentially does not convey a different meaning.

Interestingly, the dedicator identifies himself not by listing his parentage, but by describing himself as a "Schutzbefohlener", a protégé or client of (the clan of) Hatamah, a sub-tribe of the Gudam. The latter are known as a nomadic tribe that in pre-islamic times dwelt in the region north-west of Taima (Beyer and Livingstone 1987: 291). Apparently, the dedicator's parentage was of only minor importance for his identity once he had joined a group that was not genealogically linked with his own. Nor was the client without means since he was able to afford a votive-offering. Two features should be pointed out here that may affect the conception of this particular dedication. First of all, considering that the dedicator thrust himself and all his goods and chattels into the hands of an unrelated kinship-group, it is conspicuous that Manawah, also known as Manat or Manawat, the goddess of fate, is the divine recipient.[53] Of course, there may have been a more obvious reason for this; perhaps the sanctuary receiving the basin as a cult-object was dedicated to her. Secondly, it is noteworthy that the beneficiaries consist of the dedicator himself and his offspring. In his circumstances the dedicator might have expressed his gratitude by transferring the benefits of his act to his benefactors. A plausible explanation may be that this part of the inscription is an understatement, a type of reminder to the benefactors that they acquit themselves of their duties. If they do, it automatically implies that the dedicator and his offspring may face their future in confidence, although this is largely dependent on the integrity of their newfound patrons.

CIS II: 336 provides a second inscription containing the formula *ʿl ḥyy* without counting any members of the Nabataean royal family among its beneficiaries. It is executed as a relief on a stele and originates from Taima. Although it may have comprised more lines (Cantineau 1978b: 40), the actual remains do not suggest that more beneficiaries than the dedicator himself were involved.[54]

> *qṣrʾ dy qrb*
> *ʾzmw br rgʿʾ*
> *lt[d]h ʾlhtʾ*
> *ʿl ḥyy[why]*
>
> *Translation:* The cella that has offered Azimu son of Ragaa to Taddah, the goddess, for the life of himself.

Beyer and Livingstone (1987: 292) propose to read

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[53] Cf. Haussig (1965: 454f).

[54] Instead of *qṣr* rendered by DISO (262) as *small room* or *cella*, Beyer and Livingstone read *ḥgrʾ*, "das Geweihte". Its second character was already suggested by Cantineau (1978b: 40). The reading *mnwh* (1.3) is suggested by the occurrence of that name in Beyer and Livingstone (1987: 291). Cantineau's drawing does not allow for the restoration *mnwh*, but if it is assumed that the name consists of only three characters, the reading *mnh* may be entertained.

ḥgrʾ dy qrb
ʾzmw br rgʿʾ
lmnwh ʾlhtʾ
ʿl ḥyy[ ]

Translation: The dedication that has offered Azimu son of Ragaa to Manawah, the goddess, for the life of [ ]

Irrespective of the variant interpretations of the object of dedication, the dedicator's apparent intent is to attach his name to an object of public interest or public exposure. The religious framing of this intent is prescribed by the overlapping of public and religious spheres of life. Whatever the benefits of his act may have been for the dedicator in public life, epigraphically only a two-way relationship is attested: between dedicator/beneficiary and deity.

A third inscription containing the formula *ʿl ḥyy* without listing members of the Nabataean royal family as beneficiaries, was found in Zahuet el-Hidr south-east of Bostra. Its state of preservation, though, is so poor that it can not seriously contribute to our understanding of the meaning and function of the formula *ʿl ḥyy*. CIS II: 188 reads:

dnh msgdʾ dy ʿbdw ʿbd
ʿbdt wh[ ]h wbny
hm [ ] ʿl ḥ
[yyhm] šlm[55]

Translation: This is the sanctuary that Abdobodas and H[ ] and their children have made [ ] for the life of [themselves] Peace!

Excepting some characters of the formula and the identification of the object of dedication, the inscription does not yield any relevant information. Furthermore, the stone carrying it had been reused and therefore was not found *in situ*.

Finally, an inscription should be mentioned that does not use the formula *ʿl ḥyy* but the Aramaic equivalent *ʿl šlm*. Although it is executed in the Nabataean script, it does not date from the heyday of the

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[55] Lidzbarski (ESE 1: 329) suggests to read: *1. dnh msgdʾ dy bnh wʿbd 2. ʿwtw hl[ ]gw[ ] 3. h[ ]štw ʿl ḥ[yy] 4. [ ] šnt [ ]*
CIS is preferred since the occurrence of two verbs at the end of l.1 in Lidzbarski's reading is rather awkward.

Nabataean Empire, but from the middle of the second century AD. It was found in Bostra and is engraved on a stele. A suggested dating is given as 148 AD (Cantineau 1978b: 24).

> *[dnh] msgdʾ dy qrb*
> *[y]mlk br mškw ldwš*
> *rʾ ʾʿrʾ ʿl šlmh*
> *wšlm bnwhy wdʾ*
> *bywm ḥd bnysn*
> *šnt [42] lh*
> *[prkyh]*
>
> *Translation:* [This] is the sanctuary (or: *stele*) that Yamlik son of Mashku has offered to Dusares Aara for the well-being of himself and the well-being of his sons. And this on the first day of Nissan of the 42nd year of the Eparchy.

It is hard to determine the impact of this particular dedication in public life and the concomitant esteem and respect for the dedicator. Obviously, the building of a temple engenders more prestige than the erection of a stele or the dedication of a cult-object.[56] Furthermore, it is apparent that the dedicator aims to reinforce his bond with his children.

The inscription from Ruwwafa

Another inscription containing the formula *ʿl šlm* originates from Ruwwafa, a remote site in north-west Saudi Arabia. Attached to an architrave, it may be considered as the building-inscription of a sanctuary. Bowersock (1975: 514) reproduces the following bilingual text[57]

> ὑπὲρ αἰωνίου διαμονῆς κρατήσεως τῶν θειοτάτων κοσμοκρατόρων σεβαστῶν μεγίστων ʼΑρμενιακῶν Μάρκου Αὐρηλίου ʼΑντωνείνου καὶ Λουκίου

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[56] *msgd* may refer to both a sanctuary and a cult-object like a *stele* (DISO: 160).

[57] I adopt Bowersock's suggestion for reading ἐκ προ[νοίας] instead of ἐκ πει[θοῦς] (1.3) as well as his remark that it is not necessary to restore a "ν" after νεὼ (1.7). Furthermore, I assume that his reading *ʾbdt* instead of *ʿbdt* (1.4) should be attributed to a misunderstanding.

Αὐρηλίου Οὐήρου πα[τέρων πατρίδος τὸ τῶ]ν Θαμουδηνῶν
ἔ[θνος]στα καθείδρυσεν μετὰ προτρο[πῆς]
καὶ ἐκ προ[νοίας Κ]οίντου [Ἀντιστίου Ἀδουεντοῦ
πρεσβευτοῦ σεβαστῶν ἀντιστρατήγου]

*ʿl šlmʾ dy mtm[ky]n l[k]l [ʿ]l[mʾ mrqs] ʾwrlys ʾnṭwnyns
wlwqys ʾwrlys wrs dy ʾrmnyʾ [ ] dnh nwsʾ dy ʿbdt šrkt tmwdw
qdmy šrkth lmhwʾ [š]wh mn ydhm wmšmšh[m l ʿlm]
wḥfyt ʾnṭsṭys ʾdwnts hgmwnʾ [ ] wrmṣhm*

ἐπὶ νείκῃ καὶ αἰωνίῳ διαμονῇ αὐτοκρατόρων [Μ]άρκου [Αὐ]ρήλιου
Ἀντωνείνου
καὶ Λουκίου Αὐρηλίου Οὐήρου σεβ(αστῶν) Ἀρμενιακῶν [Μηδι]κῶν
Παρθικῶν μεγ[ί]στων καὶ τοῦ παντὸς οἴ[κου α]ὐτῶν τὸ τῶν
Θαμουδηνῶν ἔθνος [ ]
τὸν νεὼ συνετέλεσεν
καὶ τὸ ἱερὸν καθειέρωσεν
[ἐπὶ Λ(ουκίου) Κλ]αυδίου Μοδέστου
[πρεσβευτ(οῦ) σεβ]β ἀντιστρατ(ήγου)

Translation: Greek: For the eternal durability of dominion of the most divine rulers of the world, the greatest Emperors, *Armeniaci*, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus and Lucius Aurelius Verus, fa[thers of the fatherland], the people of the *Thamudeni* [ ] have founded through the encouragement and on the instigation of [Q]uintus [Antistius Adventus, the imperial governor].

Nabataean: For the well-being of the rulers of the whole world [Marcus] Aurelius Antoninus and Lucius Aurelius Verus, who are *Armeniaci* [ ], this is the temple which the confederation of the *Thamudeni* has made, (i.e.) the leaders of the confederation, in order that they each partake in it equally and that their worship may be conducted [forever] [ ]. Through the encouragement of Antistius Adventus, the governor [ ] and made peace among them.

Greek: Because of the victory and eternal durability of the ruling Caesars, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus and Lucius Aurelius Verus, the Emperors, *Armeniaci*, *Mediaci*, *Parthici maximi*, and their entire house, the people of the *Thamudeni* [ ] have completed the temple and have dedicated the sanctuary during the tenure of the office of imperial governor by Lucius Claudius Modestus.

Bowersock (1975: 515) concludes in his commentary that the first Greek text and the Nabataean text are counterparts. Therefore, he suggests, that the second Greek text may be a later addition. This suggestion receives further impetus, if the first Greek part and thus the Nabataean, refer to the foundation of the temple, whereas the second Greek part mentions its completion and dedication. Furthermore, in the first part Adventus is presented as the Roman governor and in the second Modestus (Bowersock 1975: 516). Finally, the epithets of the Emperors have increased in the second Greek part. From these factors, the latter should be dated to *c.*166–169 AD and the former to *c.*164–165 AD (Beaucamp 1979: 1469).

The Nabataean text renders some concepts of the first Greek part quite remarkably (Bowersock 1975: 515). However, the counterpart of Nabataean *nws*ʾ, a transliteration of Greek ναός, is not found in the first Greek part, only in the second. Likewise, Nabataean *dy ʿbdt šrkt tmwdw qdmy šrkth lmhwʾ šwh mn ydhm wmšmšhm lʿlm* corresponds better to τὸν νεὼ συνετέλεσεν καὶ τὸ ἱερὸν καθειέρωσεν of the second Greek part than to καθείδρυσεν of the first. Surely, the lacunae in the first Greek part and the Nabataean are considerable, suggesting that caution should be exercised when comparing the different parts of the text. Indeed, it appears that the Nabataean incorporates elements of both the first and the second parts of the Greek text and that the entire text should be conceived of as a whole, even if it presupposes a remarkable historical awareness on the part of the executor. If he did not accidently forget to include the imperial epithets Μηδικῶν Παρθικῶν μεγίστων in the first Greek part, he contributes to the idea that the text was executed in two phases, especially if the inscription refers to an event prior to 166 AD. On the other hand, the point of reference of a text may not always coincide with its date of execution. Since the second Greek part definitely refers to an event of 166 AD, this is the date *post quem*, whereas the death of Lucius Verus (169 AD) provides the date *ante quem*. Despite the fact that the text does refer to two separate events—the conclusion of peace among the *Thamudeni* on the instigation of Adventus on the one and some years later, under Modestus, the completion and dedication of the temple which was erected as a token of this peace on the other hand—, it appears to have been executed on one occasion.

Bowersock (1975: 515) points to Milik's observation that apart from the transliteration of ναός into Aramaic, the Nabataean text also translates some Greek concepts; κοσμοκράτωρ: κοσμο- is *lkl ʿlm*ʾ; -κράτωρ is *mtmkyn*. Considering the close parallellism between the Greek and Nabataean text, the formula *ʿl šlmʾ* renders either l.1 or l.5. The sense of these lines, however, is similar. Apparently, the Nabataean formula *ʿl šlmʾ* conveys the meaning of ὑπὲρ αἰωνίου διαμονῆς κρατήσεως appropriately. Of course, there is no social relationship between the dedicator, the people of the *Thamudeni*, and the beneficiaries, the Emperors Marcus Aurelius Antoninus and Lucius Aurelius Verus, in this instance. The formula is employed in a context resembling that of the Roman 'Emperor-Cult'. Since peace among a number of tribal groups is the major concern, it merely expresses Roman authority in a remote area of the Empire. Thus, it either partakes in the phraseology of courtesy that was employed for addressing the Roman emperor. Or, the inscription is meant to evoke a kind of insurance over the newly established peace by referring to the overlords who are perceived to wield legitimate power. Whichever may be the case, it is clear that the formula is used in a context that is slightly different from that of the examples which have been dealt with so far, because there is no face-to-face relationship between dedicator and beneficiary.

CHAPTER THREE

FOR THE LIFE OF... 'FAMILY'

THE PALMYRENE PERCEPTION AND EMPLOYMENT OF THE FORMULA

Historical background

The metamorphosis of Palmyra from an average oasis settlement into a sparkling Graeco-Roman urban jewel in the midst of the Syrian desert occurred during the first two centuries AD.[1] It was closely bound up with the slackening Nabataean control of trade and trade-routes over the southern parts of the Arabian peninsula and the Far East, together with the solid establishment of Roman power in the area from 64 BC onwards (Bowersock 1973). In addition, an entrepreneurial spirit and skill awakened and developed amongst the tribal groups inhabiting the desert surrounding the city (Gawlikowski 1988: 165). At the end of the first century BC—if Strabo is reliable (*Geography* XVI, 4: 23–24)—the Nabataeans were successful in sabotaging the Roman mission into the Arabian peninsula led by Aelius Gallus. This expedition aimed to open some of the lands yielding products which contributed to the ostentatious Nabataean wealth. However, in the course of the subsequent century, the Nabataeans were unable to prevent the main arteries being diverted from the Arabian peninsula to, both the African continent via the river Nile and the Syrian-Mesopotamian area via the river Euphrates. Eventually, Augustus who, at least, had premeditated such a scheme achieved his aims (Strabo, *Geography* XVI, 4: 22). Henceforth, the wares and products from Arabia Eudaimon were shipped to Egypt reaching the Mediterranean via the Nile. Similarly, the merchandise from the Far East was transported up the Euphrates by boat and raft as far as it was navigeable, to Hit—situated on the west-bank of the river about 160 km west of modern Baghdad—, and perhaps even up to Ana—

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[1] Cf. for the relevant data concerning the history of Palmyra: Drijvers (1977: 837–863); Starcky and Gawlikowski (1985).

situated on the west-bank of the river about 120 km north-west of Hit—(Gawlikowski 1988: 169). Thence, the shortest route to the Mediterranean crossed the Syrian desert, coming into contact with Palmyra. Of course, the domestication and use of the camel was a *conditio sine qua non* for traversing the desert (Teixidor 1984: 15f; Klengel 1987: 291). That the city was well-provided with water—it must have been a welcome relief for both attendants and pack-animals—was an important condition for Palmyra becoming a major emporium or 'desert-port' along the south-eastern border of the Roman Empire (Teixidor 1984: 7ff).

Economically, transport by water is more profitable than that by land, since boats and rafts are able to carry much larger cargoes than camels (Gawlikowski 1988: 168). Compared with the large tracts which the Nabataeans had to cover overland, the diversion of the main arteries to the Nile and the Euphrates entailed a considerable shortening of the distances to be traversed. However, it would be misleading to suggest that these changes were the result of deliberate political decisions. They should not be taken to represent the intricate political and economic processes that lie at the heart of the matter, about which we only have a limited grasp.

At the turn of the Era the Romans displayed a particular interest in the development of the city of Palmyra. They were actively involved in rendering it its Graeco-Roman character and organizing it according to Graeco-Roman principles, although they showed due respect for indigenous initiatives and existing modes of organization (Colledge 1987). Particularly after the visit of Germanicus, Tiberius' nephew, between 17 and 19 AD, Roman engagement in Palmyrene affairs substantially increased. They took an active part in reconstructing the cella of the temple of Bel which was dedicated in 32 AD (Seyrig 1940: 336; Colledge 1976). Whilst their motives are unclear, military considerations will certainly have played a role. Strategically, environmental factors mark Palmyra as a desirable spot, particularly as its control might prove useful against enemies from the East. Another motive may be of 'state-financial' nature. Provided that the Romans discerned the possibility of rapidly developing the city into a major emporium, it is conceivable that they stimulated it to ensure themselves of a regular source of income by collecting duties.[2] From the beginning of the first century onwards Palmyra was subject to Rome

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[2] Although it primarily deals with municipal affairs, the famous 'Tariff of Palmyra'

(Bowersock 1973: 136; Teixidor 1984: 10f; Starcky and Gawlikowski 1985: 37f). It regained some of its independence after Hadrian's visit in 129 AD when it earned the status of *civitas libera*, i.e. 'free', autonomous city (Matthews 1984: 161f; Starcky and Gawlikowski 1985: 42ff). Hadrian granted it some privileges, probably including the right of independently levying municipal taxes, which may have been the main reason for executing the 'Tariff' (Teixidor 1984: 58). The granting of such a privilege corresponds appropriately with the prominent position the city managed to achieve during the first century AD. Subsequently, relations with Rome seem to have become more intimate, especially under the Severans (Starcky and Gawlikowski 1985: 49ff). Politically and military, however, Rome exercized full control during most of its golden age.

Roman engagement has been detected in the organization of civic life as well. During the reign of Nero (54–68 AD), the city was artificially split up into four districts or quarters.[3] At the same time a city-council seems to have been introduced (Starcky and Gawlikowski 1985: 41). Both innovations are well-known features of Graeco-Roman cities throughout the Empire being implemented for administrative purposes (Gawlikowski 1973: 47). As a civic matter, the division of the city in four quarters did not take into account existing modes of indigenous organization and may well have cut right through them. Nevertheless, the latter do not seem to have been totally ignored either for each quarter was indicated by the name of one of the leading Palmyrene tribes or clans. It is tempting to assume that this emerged because each of the tribes made up the largest or most important part of the population inhabiting a specific quarter, or that its clans rallied together under that particular name for combined action. In addition, each quarter was assigned an extant sanctuary which probably already acted as a focal point for the tribe that lent it its name, but now came to perform certain municipal duties as well. Thus, two different modes of social organization were subtly interlaced. Nevertheless, qua status, the Roman reform put Palmyra on a level equal to that with cities less remote from the Mediterranean that already were organized according to Graeco-Roman principles (Pleket 1971a). However, as

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seems to have been executed in analogy to tax-prescriptions operative in several seaports (Teixidor 1983b: 236; Teixidor 1984: 59; Matthews 1984: 172).

[3] Cf. for the creation of artificial tribes in an urban environment: Sartre (1982b: 87ff). Sartre (1982b: 88) moreover observes a decrease in tribal or clan-solidarity once nomadic tribes have sedentarized.

the newly imposed structure roughly followed existing dividing lines, it did not seriously affect an individual's personal status. Yet, for identification purposes, his possible frames of reference had increased by one. The Palmyrene epigraphical record suggests that one thing and another were unproblematically integrated. The participant's mind made no actual distinction between the traditional frame of reference governed by principles of kinship and the new one. Therefore, the question which of the possible frames of reference is operative each time one of the four designations with a double connotation appears in order to identify a particular person, is of minor importance.[4]

Despite the Semitic background of the majority of its population, the character and appearance of Palmyra was marbled with Graeco-Roman traits, with the local élite being oriented at and heavily influenced by Graeco-Roman standards. They behaved as 'good' citizens of the Roman Empire. These factors should even be considered when assessing the aspirations of queen Zenobia which marked the fall of Palmyra in 273 AD. This foolish undertaking should not so much be regarded as a struggle for independence, but as being representative of the internal strife for power within the Empire. Between the death of Philippus Arabs in 249 AD and the ascent to the throne of Diocletian in 284 AD, this quarreling shook the Empire to its foundations (Starcky and Gawlikowski 1985: 62ff). Numerous Emperors wielded supreme power for a relative short term, whereas intrigues and assassinations of reigning monarchs were more the rule than the exception. Very few showed themselves capable of restoring and maintaining a certain degree of law and order. It was probably unfortunate that Zenobia found herself opposed to Aurelian (270–275 AD) who, despite his short term of office, was one of the more vigorous Emperors in this turbulent period.

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[4] As pointed out by Schlumberger (1971: 126), in the course of time the tribal connotation became blurred. Eventually only the municipal connotation remained: "... dire qu'on était *des* BNY M'ZYN, ou dire qu'on était *Palmyrénien* étaient deux façons de dire la mème chose". However, the inscription to which he alludes to substantiate his observation, CIS II: 3966, dates from 64 AD, i.e. from the time the administrative reform was actually carried out. Nevertheless, the qualification of a person as *the Palmyrene who belongs to the Beni Ma'azin, tdmry' dy mn bny m'zyn*, suggests that traditional forms of organization were in a process of merging into or being replaced by an overall urban frame of reference. The ancients were well aware of their ambiguous employment of kinship- and tribal terminology and the ensuing overlapping of civic and tribal social structures (Rostovtzeff 1935: 145f).

Despite the importance of Roman engagement in municipal affairs for the development of Palmyra as a Graeco-Roman city, its mercurial rise may be attributed to the entrepreneurial spirit of the indigenous population, mostly of Semitic and Arabic stock. Furthermore, conditions were extremely favourable since the importance of Nabataean trade-routes had decreased and the Nabataean Empire was in decline. Moreover, like the Nabataeans, the Palmyrenes managed to control large tracts of the supply channels either by military force or by diplomacy and very often by a combination of both. As Gawlikowski (1988: 164f) has pointed out, the great Palmyrene entrepreneurs originated from the steppe and as members of the urban élite they entertained kinship-ties with many different nomadic groups.[5] Since these nomadic groups constituted an abundant resource for the recruitment of military units to protect caravans from the hostilities of rival groups and notorious bands of brigands, this contributed to their success in policing the desert.

At the same time it is significant that many a nomadic group was involved in the 'Palmyrene enterprise'. During the second and third centuries AD, for example, the major trade of the inhabitants of the hill-country north-west of Palmyra was the breeding of pack- and riding-animals required for properly equipping caravans (Schlumberger 1951; Gawlikowski 1988). In addition, several provisions in the 'Tariff' suggest that horti- and agriculture were intensively exercized in the vicinity of the city (Matthews 1984: 171f; Teixidor 1984: 71ff). Fixing nomadic groups to the soil by drawing them into the 'Palmyrene enterprise' under the pursuit of their traditional occupations and activities was a major achievement as well as the main condition for the Palmyrene commercial success (Gawlikowski 1988: 165).

Conspicuously, these developments commence coincidentally with the Roman engagement in municipal affairs and are concomitant with the gradual increase of the city's population. Presumably, the latter resulted from the tribal élite settling down in the political centre. Whilst the Roman presence may have catalysed the process, conversely Roman interest may have been aroused by the actions of the tribal élites. These phenomena are two sides of the same coin. Basically, the emergence of Palmyra as a major political and commercial centre in the midst of the desert resulted from their interdependency. In its heyday the 'Palmyrene enterprise' was a well-oiled machinery. From the beginning of the first century AD onwards the Palmyrenes managed to lay a firm hold on the Euphrates as a trade-route, even when most of its political and military control was in the hands of the Parthians, the sworn enemies of Rome. Along the route they established branch-offices and populated considerable quarters in major emporia. Charax Spasinou, the well-known capital of the small kingdom of Mayshan situated at the confluence of the Euphrates and the Tigris in the south-east of modern Iraq, entertained close relations with the Parthians. Yet, relations between Palmyra and Charax seem already to have existed as early as the beginning of the first century AD. They were initiated due to Germanicus who sent an embassy to the king of Mayshan (Cantineau 1931: 139; Gawlikowski 1988: 166).

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[5] Cf. also (Seyrig 1950; Matthews 1984: 169ff; Starcky and Gawlikowski 1985: 74ff).

Approximately half-way between Charax and Hit, Vologesias, founded on the Euphrates around 70 AD by a Parthian monarch of the same name, developed into a major emporium accommodating a large Palmyrene colony (Gawlikowski 1983a: 64). Further upstream Palmyrene presence has been demonstrated at Ana (Gawlikowski 1983a: 61) and Bidjan, a small island-fortress between Ana and Hit (Gawlikowski 1983b), as well as in wadi Hawran near Hit (Gawlikowski 1983a: 58). Palmyrene detachments were stationed at key-points along the important caravan-track between Hit and Palmyra (Starcky 1963; Teixidor 1963; Gawlikowski 1988: 167). Finally, Dura-Europos lodged a contingent of Palmyrenes, at least from the time of its annexation by the Romans in about 164 AD (Gawlikowski 1983a: 61).

The Palmyrenes intensively exploited the Euphrates for transport purposes. On the downward journey they traversed the desert to embark at Dura-Europos or a little further down at Ana, Bidjan or perhaps Hit. Then they sailed down the river to Charax which was the main destination of Palmyrene caravan-traffic. Some of the Palmyrenes even appear to have sailed the Ocean to places in the neighbourhood of the Indus-delta (Seyrig 1936; Gawlikowski 1988: 167). Since the navigeability of the Euphrates becomes problematical after Hit, on the upward journey they disembarked there and followed the caravan-track back home.

The majority of inscriptions relating to the caravan-trade found in Palmyra so far, date from the relatively short period between Hadrian's visit to the city and the death of his successor Antoninus Pius (138–161 AD), i.e. between 131 to 161 AD. Usually they refer to the erection of a statue of someone who contributed to the success of a particular undertaking. This may be inferred from the recurring standard formulae *bdyl dy špr lhwn*, *because he pleased them*, and *lyqr*, *in honour of*. The former refers to the salutary deeds of the person honoured; the latter reveals the incentive of the dedicator(s). The texts are seldom more specific. On account of the abnormal numbers of caravan-inscriptions, the heyday of Palmyrene caravan-traffic and the flourishing of the city in general, is attributed to the middle of the second century AD. A period roughly coinciding with tranquillity at the Roman-Parthian front.[6] It also complies with the observation that large amounts of money were spent on building-activities during this period. The 'Great Colonnade' traversing the city from West to East and as a processional way connecting the precincts of, among others, the temple of Allat with the temple of Bel, seems to have been erected at this time (Gawlikowski 1976b: 159; Drijvers 1977: 858; Will 1983: 74f). Moreover, numerous dedications are dated to the second century AD as well as some of the most splendid tombs and mausolea. The epigraphical silence on caravan-expeditions between 161 AD and the reign of Septimius Severus (193–211 AD) is usually linked with the renewal of hostilities between Romans and Parthians under Marcus Aurelius (161–180 AD) and Lucius Verus (161–169 AD). Caravans ceased to set out. Septimius Severus, however, campaigned successfully against the Parthians and restored, if only temporarily, the prospect of a safe journey (Gawlikowski 1988: 166).

However, the abnormal numbers of caravan-inscriptions may be explained in another way. Palmyrene epigraphical testimony of such expeditions concentrates on the route to the Persian Gulf. Not a single inscription was found referring to the route to the Mediterranean. Furthermore, the inscriptions that are a little more specific on the exploits of the person honoured mention that he saved the caravan from impending dangers, sometimes described as originating particularly from nomadic groups roaming the desert. Apparently, caravans had little to fear from Parthian covetousness (Gawlikowski 1983a: 59). In fact, as the masters of large tracts of the territory traversed by the

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[6] If tranquillity on the Roman-Parthian front involved the retreat of troops, tribal groups may have returned to roaming the desert and raiding caravans. In that case the accidental effect of policing the desert brought about by the military presence of both super-powers diminishes. Protecting their interests consequently became a matter of concern to the Palmyrenes themselves and as such a matter of prestige among the municipal élite. If this is the case, then the increase of caravan-inscriptions tells more about the lacking safety along the route than about the frequency with which caravans set out.

Euphrates, the Parthians substantially contributed to safeguard Palmyrene expeditions. Moreover, nothing suggests that Palmyrenes and Parthians were at odds with each other (Drijvers 1977: 843; Gawlikowski 1983a: 59). Apart from the possibility of future archaeological discoveries, the epigraphical silence on caravan-traffic during large periods of Palmyra's history may simply be explained by the fact that nothing worthwhile mentioning happened. Since the Romans had a firm hold on this area, it accounts for the absence of inscriptions relating to the route from Palmyra to the Mediterranean.

Finally, the abundance of caravan-inscriptions from the middle of the second century AD can be explained. The tranquillity on the Roman-Parthian front meant that the super-powers entrenched themselves in securely controlled areas, whereas in times of tension they more intensively policed the desert. In such times their presence in the desert suppressed raids of nomadic groups as a side-effect. More importantly, since both powers simultaneously sought to place nomadic groups under an obligation as much as possible, they each strengthened their own ranks. Tranquillity on the Roman-Parthian front entailed that a great part of the Syrian-Mesopotamian desert, which acted as a kind of buffer, was left to the capricious control of nomadic groups. In the immediate absence of detachments representing Roman and Parthian authority it is with them, as is indicated epigraphically, that the Palmyrene forces had to deal.

The convenient situation of Palmyra for the caravan-trade, its status as a frontier town of the Roman Empire as well as the industry displayed by its inhabitants to seize upon the political and economic opportunities of their time, paid handsome dividends. Monumental buildings and structures still determine the image and skyline of the city. Most of them belong to the first and second centuries AD and bear proudly witness to the city's spectacular prosperity. As was the case elsewhere in the Roman Empire and the Ancient Near East, civic munificence and euergetism incited wealthy persons and families to furnish and maintain public amenities to reaffirm their status (Will 1957; Gawlikowski 1983a: 66; Matthews 1984: 170). Thus, many inscriptions convey names of persons and groups that implicitly claim credit for having erected a particular building or part of a construction or another object of public and, sometimes, personal interest. The majority of these inscriptions yield all the characteristics previously established for dedicatory texts containing the formula *ʿl ḥyy*, for the life of. Generally, this corpus of inscriptions can be divided into two major categories. The first is attached to or refers to temples and altars as well as other objects of monumental dimensions. The other pertains particularly to altars of modest dimensions—*c*.40 to *c*.60 cm high and *c*.25 to *c*.35 cm wide—which were originally designed for burning incense and usually were dedicated to the 'Anonymous God'. Unlike the Nabataean examples, in both categories the beneficiaries are related, without exception, to the dedicators in terms of kinship.[7] Since there is a difference in both intent and quantity, the monumental inscriptions shall be dealt with at length first. The inscriptions pertaining to altars of modest dimensions and dedicated to the 'Anonymous God' shall be dealt with as a group later in this chapter.

Major dedications

The oldest inscription featuring the formula *ʿl ḥyy* was published by Starcky (1956: 512). It is inscribed on a slab of fragile limestone measuring 14 × 20 cm. Its exact provenance is unknown. Only the right-hand side is preserved. Starcky dates it to the first century BC on palaeographic grounds.

byrḥ knwn š[nt 200 +]
89 ml[ ][8]
qrb mqy[mw][9]
br ymlkw t[dy]
mn bny bw[ ]
lbrt bl w[ ]
ʾlhyʾ [ʿl ḥywhy]
wḥyy [ ]

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[7] Of the four Nabataean inscriptions which not explicitly list members of the royal house as beneficiaries, one is badly damaged, one only lists the dedicator himself as a beneficiary, and one is dated posterior to the Roman annexation of the Nabataean Empire. The remaining one does mention the dedicator's offspring as beneficiaries. Cf. above p. 74ff.

[8] Milik (DFD: 148f) restores *ml[ʾtʾ]* deriving it from the root *mlʾ* that may have the meaning "consommer un repas". The object of dedication, then, might be a part of a temple, viz. a "salle de repas sacrés".

[9] Starcky mentions *mqy* as an alternative. However, *mqy[mw]* is more plausible. As a proper name Moqaimu is far more common than Maqqai in Palmyra. Moreover, the first dated inscription in which Maqqai appears as a proper name belongs to 136 AD, whereas, apart from the one here, Moqaimu is already found in an inscription dated to 3 AD (Stark 1971: 35f).

> *Translation:* In the month Kanun of the year 289 (= October 23 BC) [ ] has offered Moqai[mu] son of Yamliku [who] belongs to the Beni Bo[ ] to Bel's daughter and [ ] the gods [for the life of himself] and the life of [ ]

The poor state of preservation prevents the beneficiaries from being identified. The name of the dedicator is only partly preserved. Thus, it is difficult to comment upon their relationship. However, as in Palmyrene inscriptions dedicators and beneficiaries are usually related to each other in terms of kinship, this probably occurred here too. The divine recipient is not otherwise known, making it uncertain whether the goddess entertained a special relationship with the Beni Bo[ ].

> Since the name of Moqaimu's father appears to be missing, it is impossible to identify the dedicator more definitely. Even if Starcky is given credit for his observation that at the most one word per line is missing and if, on account of that, it is assumed that *ymlkw* (1.4) is actually the name of his father, then he still remains elusive for it would be the only citation in the extensive Palmyrene epigraphical record of *mqymw br ymlkw*. However, *ymlkw br mqymw*, apparently a prominent citizen, features in CIS II: 4123, dated to 83 AD. The gap in time of more than a hundred years, precludes the unconditional linking of this person with the dedicator, although the latter may be the former's son.
>
> A similar argument applies to the qualification *who belongs to the Beni Bo[. . .]*. Starcky (1956: 512ff) and Stark (1971: 56f) list five tribal names beginning with "bw". Gawlikowski (1973: 32), however, very convincingly dismisses them by pointing out that all five appear on tesserae only. As the banquets to which these tickets gave access were essentially a private matter, it is more plausible that the names occurring on them refer to a number of children of the same father who jointly bore the expenses of the feast. Moreover, none of the indications on the tesserae is preceded by the word *pḥd*, *tribe*. Gawlikowski makes his remarks in an attempt to thin out the extensive list of Palmyrene tribes containing around 55 names which Stark (1971: 55ff) presents. Gawlikowski lists only about 15. Apart from the designation *pḥd* the main criterion which he applies is the question whether alleged tribal names are preceded by the qualification *dy mn*, *who belongs to*. The beginning of 1.5 strongly suggests that *dy mn* is present here, entailing that Gawlikowski's conclusions should be reviewed at this point. However, since no tribal name beginning with "bw" is known in Palmyra, the appearance of this term does not substantially contribute to the identification of the dedicator.

Another ancient inscription (*Inv*.XII: 22) was found near the *tetrapylon* of the 'Great Colonnade' in the neighbourhood of the theatre. It is engraved on the drum of a column that emerged from the debris of the Colonnade. Therefore, it is unknown whether the drum was reused in a later structure.

> *byrḥ ʾlwl šnt 200 +*
> *93 qrb blšwry*
> *br mqymw dy mn bny zmrʾ*
> *ʿmwdʾ dnh lṣbs wʾnhyt*
> *ʾlhyʾ ʿl ḥywhy wḥyy*
> *bnwhy wʾḥwhy*
>
> *Translation:* In the month Elul of the year 293 (= September 18 BC) Belshuri son of Moqaimu who belongs to the Beni Zimra has offered this column to *ṣbs* and Anahita, the gods, for the life of himself and the life of his sons and his brothers.

It is well-known that a building or a sanctuary usually arose as a result of the combined effort of a number of individuals and/or groups of people. Although excavations in Palmyra have not yielded any evidence for a temple of *ṣbs* and Anahita, Belshuri's dedication should be considered to be a contribution to it.

> Belshuri son of Moqaimu is not otherwise known. Ingholt (1938: 137) reports that in the central chamber of the tomb of Abdastor, founded in 98 AD, a graffito reads *dkyr mqymw br blšwry bṭb, may Moqaimu son of Belshuri be remembered in good.* Given that the gap in time between our inscription and the graffito is about a century and that customarily a man's son was named after his father, the Moqaimu mentioned in the graffito might be the son of the dedicator. A trilingual—Latin, Greek, Palmyrene—inscription, dated to 52 AD, mentions a female called Baaltega daughter of Belshuri (Rodinson 1950: 138). She is described as *dy mn pḥd bny gdybwl, who belongs to the tribe of the Beni Gaddibol.* It is unlikely, that she is related to the Belshuri of our inscription unless the Beni Gaddibol are identical to the Beni Zimra, which is improbable, or unless the Beni Zimra constitute a sub-tribe of the Beni Gaddibol, which might be possible. In that case, Belshuri had his daughter married to a member of one of the leading tribes. The fact that the offspring of Baaltega made the effort to have a trilingual inscription executed, testifies to its preeminence.

Belshuri's place in Palmyrene society and history cannot be established from the inscription. That he belonged to the Beni Zimra is not very informative. Apart from this instance, the tribe is only mentioned in *Inv*.X: 145, which is inscribed on a block of stone measuring 163 × 54 cm that was reused in a later structure.

> *[byrḥ šnt 300] + 42 ḥmnʾ dnh ʿbdw wqrbw mlkw br blʿqb br m[ykʾ]*[10]
> *[ ]mn pḥd bny zmrʾ lšdrpʾ wldʿnt ʾlhyʾ ṭb[yʾ]*
>
> *Translation:* [In the month of the year 300] and 42 Malku son of Belaqab son of Mi[ka and] who belong(s) to the tribe of the Beni Zimra have made and have offered this sanctuary to Shadrafa and Duanat, the good gods [ ]

According to Starcky (1949b: 45), the inscription should be dated to the middle of the first century AD. This accords with the occurrence of the name of the one known dedicator in the genealogy of Yamliku son of Moqaimu Aqqalish son of *Malku Abbanit son of Belaqab son of Mika* son of Matta, the Palmyrene, who in 83 AD had a tomb built for himself and his offspring (CIS II: 4123).[11] Despite Gawlikowski's (1973: 35) assertion that Malku son of Belaqab belonged to the Beni Zimra, it is not unequivocally confirmed by the mutilated text of *Inv*.X: 145. The description may only apply to the one unknown dedicator. However, if it does pertain to Malku as well, then the prominent position of his descendant Yamliku son of Moqaimu Aqqalish reaffirms the image of the Beni Zimra as an influential group in the first half of the first century AD. It is interesting that in both *Inv*.X: 145 and *Inv*.XII: 22 one of the two divine recipients originates from the area east of Palmyra, i.e. Anahita, an Iranian goddess, and Duanat, *He from Anat*, the tutelary deity of Ana (Starcky 1949b: 82). This might indicate that the Beni Zimra had links with or perhaps even originated from the East.[12]

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[10] Cf. for the interpretation of *ḥmnʾ*: Drijvers (1988).

[11] The plural form of the verbs in the inscription cited above suggests that Malku was not the only dedicator.

[12] The interpretation of the name Zimra has been the subject of discussion. Starcky (1949b: 49ff), hesitantly followed by Gawlikowski (1973: 35), considers it to be a proper name. According to Milik (1967: 556; DFD: 55ff), however, it describes the profession which the members of a group of people share. Additionally, they may be related to each other by ties of kinship. Consequently, Milik suggests that the Beni Zimra constituted a 'tribe' that practised the art of singing for cultic purposes. This art was transmitted from

In the foundations of the great sacrificial altar in the precinct of the temple of Bel, executed in the second century AD (Gawlikowski 1973: 63), an inscribed fragment of an altar was found (Cantineau 1938: 79; Gawlikowski 1973: 60). The remaining inscription it carries is undated, but the palaeography is designated to be archaic. Since the fragment was reused in a later structure, it may be suggested that it should be attributed at least to the first half of the first century AD.

> *[ʿ]ltʾ dh dy ʿb[d] mlkw br ḥyrn*
> *[br ʿ]gyl[w] lbwlʿstr ʾlhʾ*
> *[ʿl ḥywhy] wḥyy bnwhy wʾḥ[w]hy*
>
> *Translation:* This is the altar that Malku son of Hairan [son of O]gailu has made for Bolastor, the god, [for the life of himself] and the life of his sons and his brothers.

All three names in the dedicator's genealogy are very common in Palmyra (Stark 1971). However, the sequence *ḥyrn br ʿgylw* is unique. The sequence *mlkw (br) ḥyrn* does occur four times.[13] Twice it is found on tesserae, viz. RTP 729a and RTP 770a. The first reads *mlkw ḥyrn*; the second *mlkw ḥyrn ʾʿby*. The name *ʾʿby* may refer to a renowned ancestor since the name of a clan's founding-father often qualifies a distant descendant's genealogy. It largely contributes to the phenomenon of telescoping genealogies. The tesserae and the inscription may possibly refer to one and the same person. Similarly, *Inv.*XI: 95, engraved on a block of stone reused in 'Wall T', records a Malku (son of) Hairan, *mlkw ḥyrn*. Before the enlargement of the court of the Bel-temple, 'Wall T' marked its boundary (Gawlikowski 1973: 54f). The script-type of *Inv.*XI: 95 belongs to the first century BC and possibly refers to the same person as the inscription cited above. Finally, a text inscribed on the rim of jar, also found in the temple of Bel, mentions a certain *mlkw*

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generation to generation within this genealogically determined group. Essentially, though, the group derived its name from the profession it practised and preserved. However, it is very uncommon and without precedent for professional groups to designate themselves as a 'tribe' (*pḥd*). Another instance is found if the name 'Beni Kumra' is explained in a similar way, i.e. as the 'tribe' that practised and preserved the priesthood of Bel. Milik of course advances this idea, but it may be similarly contested. It may be true that professional groups were designated with the use of *bny*, *sons of*, *members of*, but it was very uncommon for an individual to identify himself with such a group, although he may present himself as *a* singer or *a* priest. Whilst the Beni Zimra is foremost a genealogical group, the members of which may have individually practised the art of singing, this cannot be inferred from the tribal name.

[13] The ways in which a reconstructed genealogy of Ogailu may contribute to the identification of the dedicator will not be considered since such a procedure depends on speculation.

br ḥyrn. It also reveals the names of two of probably three sons of this Malku: Kohailu and Zabdateh.[14] If this *mlkw br ḥyrn* is identical with the one from our inscription, then *khylw* and *zbdʿth* belong to the beneficiaries of the dedication.[15]

Another inscription from the temple of Bel also mentions Bolastor as a divine recipient (Cantineau 1931: 130; Gawlikowski 1973: 63f). It is engraved on a slab of stone that is mutilated at the right-hand side. It appears to have been executed on two different occasions.

[ ] šnt 360 mṭlʾ
[dh w]ʿmwdyh wšryth wtṭlylh
[ʿbd]w ʾwšy br khylw wʾwšy
[ ]ʾ bny ḥyrn br ʾwšy
[dy mn] bny mytʾ lbw[l]ʿstr
[wšdyʾ] ʾlhyʾ ṭbyʾ ʿl ḥyyhwn
[ ] bʾyr ywm [ ]
[ ] bt ʾlhyn wbtyn [ ]nš[ ]
[bw]lʿstr wšdyʾ
[ ] lbnynʾ dy ʾlhyʾ

Translation: [ ] of the year 360 (= 49 AD) Awshai son of Kohailu and Awshai [ ] sons of Hairan son of Awshai [who belong to] the Beni Mita have made this portico and its columns and its deck-beam and its roof for Bolastor [and the demons], the good gods, for the life of themselves. [ ] in Iyyar, day [ ] the house of the gods and the houses of [Bo]lastor and the demons [ ] for the construction of the gods.[16]

Whilst the temple of Bel sheltered a number of deities (Gawlikowski 1973: 63), Bolastor is probably a prior manifestation of Bel (Gawlikowski 1990b: 2609f).[17] Since this inscription is later than the dedication of the cella of the temple of Bel, it should be assumed that Bolastor continued to exist as an independent deity.

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[14] The inscription reads: *[ ] wkhylw wzbdʿth bny mlkw br ḥyrn* (Ingholt 1936: 97).

[15] The name *zbdʿth* appears, probably as a patronym, in an inscription reproduced by Cantineau (1933: 186). The son of this Zabdateh, whose name is missing, is said to have belonged to the Beni Mita. It is drafted in an archaic script-type, like the inscription cited above.

[16] As Akkadian *šedu* may have benevolent aspects, *šdyʾ* probably indicates benevolent divine beings. Despite the malevolent connotations, *šdyʾ* is usually rendered as 'demons'.

[17] Teixidor (1979: 8f) explains the name 'Bolastor' as a cultic formula employed for designating the union of Bel with his spouse Herta that subsequently became the object of a separate cult. However, the explicit association of Bolastor with the Beni Mita—rather than with the Palmyrenes generally—suggests that he is a tribal deity. Moreover,

> The first part of the text will be discussed in preference to ll.7–10 which seem to have been added at a later occasion and have large lacunae. The amount of characters missing at the beginning of each line constitutes a major problem. Milik’s (DFD: 47) reconstruction is based on the assumption that at least 6–7 characters disappeared at the beginning of l.1. As the lacunae at the beginning of the subsequent lines seem to increase, Milik lavishly restores. He assumes an entire line to be missing between l.6 and l.7. However, his assumption that at the beginning of l.1 a phrase like *[byrḥ]* is lacking, is questionable. It is not uncommon in Aramaic epigraphy for *yrḥ* to be omitted. In that case the preposition *b* is directly followed by the name of the month. Thus the lacunae which Milik assumes should be reduced by half. Consequently his interpretation of l.4 and his genealogical reconstruction of this particular branch of the Beni Mita looses plausibility (DFD: 62–64). Simultaneously, Cantineau’s reproduction of the text, which is cited above, and Gawlikowski’s (1973: 63) conception of the relationship between the dedicators gain credibility.

The dedication was made by two full cousins called Awshai, both grandsons of Hairan son of Awshai. At the beginning of l.4 the name of the second Awshai’s father (l.3), the brother of Kohailu is missing (Gawlikowski 1973: 63). A son of Awshai son of Kohailu by the name of Ogailu may feature in CIS II: 4119, dated to 57 AD, which reports that during his lifetime Ogailu executed a tomb *in honour of himself and in honour of his children and his brothers.*[18] It is interesting that Ogailu identifies himself in CIS II: 4119 as *the Palmyrene who belongs to the tribe of the Beni Mita* implying that his frame of reference exceeds that of the tribe as a body social. By 57 AD the ‘city’ apparently already functioned as another corporate body.

> The Beni Mita are explicitly mentioned in eight more inscriptions. In at least five more instances it may also be assumed that the persons described belong to this tribe. Some of these, however, refer to the same person or persons. Cantineau (1933: 186), which is undated, has already been alluded to above, when commenting on Cantineau (1938: 79). If the identification is right, then the testimony of the relationship between

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the association of a number of minor deities, if Gawlikowski’s (1973: 64) interpretation is correct, suggests that he was a regular deity.

[18] *‘gylw br ’wšy* also appears in CIS II: 4362, but it is uncertain whether the same person is meant.

the Beni Mita and Bolastor increases by one example. Members of the Beni Mita also feature in CIS II: 4109—some of which reappear in CIS II: 4111—, 4110, 4116, 4117, 4118 and in Cantineau (1938: 76) as well as in Cantineau (1933: 175), Cantineau (1933: 183 = Gawlikowski 1973: 43), Rodinson (1950: 137), *Inv*.IX: 20 and probably *Inv*.XII: 42. The last five inscriptions all refer to one and the same person. His genealogy is most extensively recorded in the Palmyrene part of Rodinson (1950: 137): *Hairan son of Bona son of Rabbel son of Bona son of Atenatan son of Taimi*. Since the inscription is dated to 52 AD, the genealogy reaches well back into the first century BC. Unfortunately, however, none of the genealogies of others belonging to the Beni Mita correspond, even partly, with that of Hairan. He must have held a prominent place in city-life during the fifties and sixties of the first century AD. He was involved, for example, in the construction of the temple of Bel. *Inv*.IX: 20—the Greek part is dated to 56 AD; the Palmyrene part to 60 AD—relates the erection of a statue in his honour by the college of the *priests of Bel*. Cantineau (1933: 175), dated to 74 AD, states that the *council and the people*, *bwl' wdms*, put up a statue in his honour. The former is bilingual and inscribed on a console found in the southern portico of the temple of Bel. The Greek part states that the statue was erected *for honour and benevolence*, τειμῆς καὶ εὐνοίας ἕνεκεν. Compared with the part which was written in Palmyrene, the genealogy of Hairan in the Greek section falls one name short. It is not the phenomenon, but the fact that seemingly at random one or more names are dropped that is remarkable in Palmyrene epigraphy. It indicates that genealogies are highly unreliable as an instrument for identification purposes, especially as no clue is provided on the criteria for 'telescoping', apart from the suggestion that renowned ancestors retained their position more easily than less prominent ones. Atenatan, the last member of Hairan's genealogy in the Palmyrene section of *Inv*.IX: 20, may have impressed his contemparies and descendants more deeply than his son Bona, who is omitted in the Greek. Cantineau (1933: 175), a trilingual inscription that was found on a column in front of the theatre, reports that the City, represented by its highest administrative institution, *bwl' wdms*, ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος, *bule et civitas*, erected a statue in honour of Hairan son of Bona, who is described as *pious*, *pium*, εὐσεβῆ, and *loving his fatherland*, *philopatrin*, φιλόπατριν, *rḥym mdynth*. These qualifications are meant to justify the erection of the statue. The benevolent and generous attitude Hairan displayed towards his hometown found its expression, among others, in a substantial contribution to the construction of the temple of Bel: *mṣbth bbyn' [']l[hy']*, *decorator in the construction of the gods*. 'House of the gods' is a common description of the temple of Bel (Gawlikowski 1973: 71).

Inv.IX: 20 and Cantineau (1933: 175) portray Hairan son of Bona as being thoroughly involved in the (re)construction of the temple of Bel, which was initiated and sponsored by the Romans (Colledge 1976). Only a select number of Latin, Palmyrene-Latin or even trilingual inscriptions have been found. In at least two of them Hairan son of Bona features prominently, viz. in Cantineau (1933: 175) and Rodinson (1950: 137), and perhaps in *Inv*.XII: 42. It is likely, then, that as a member of the Palmyrene élite he entertained close relations with the Romans. Therefore, he may have been deeply involved in the administrative reorganization of the city which roughly coincides with his political activity. It is noteworthy that he describes himself in Rodinson (1950: 137) foremost as *filius Palmirenus* and subsequently as one *who belongs to the Beni Mita*. His preference may relate to his efforts for Palmyra to become a unified and independent civic entity in which tribal affiliation played a secondary role only, despite its importance in social life. A citizen's frame of reference ought to be the city.

Rodinson (1950: 137) announces that Hairan's father, Bona, married Baaltega, daughter of Belshuri, *who belongs to the tribe of the Beni Gaddibol*. Considering Hairan's prominent position in the Beni Mita as well as in Palmyrene city-life, as is suggested by Rodinson's inscription, which was found in a monumental tomb, his father must have had a similar standing. Hairan's extensive genealogy functioned to enhance his status. Apart from the founding-father, the rest of his ancestors share in this enhancement. Their place in society is defined and, perhaps, claimed as well. Since it is unlikely that the marriage of a prominent member of one tribe with a relatively unimportant one of another would be worth mentioning unless there were exceptional circumstances, a close relationship between the respective tribes may be intimated. The citation of the woman's name suggests that she also belonged to the tribal élite. Possibly, the marital association of the respective élites expressed either wished for or existing bonds of co-operation between the Beni Mita and the Beni Gaddibol.

To summarize, the Beni Mita may have entertained a close relationship with Bolastar whom they associated with Bel. They substantially contributed to the construction of the "house of the gods", i.e. the temple of Bel.[19] In addition, one of its prominent members was probably deeply involved in the Roman administrative reorganization during the sixties of the first century AD. Consequently, perhaps supported by the Beni Gaddibol, the Beni Mita played an important role in the rapid development of Palmyra in many ways.

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[19] Cantineau (1938: 76) claims that the city-council had a statue erected for another member of the Beni Mita by the name of *Abgar son of Patroclus, also known as Astourga,*

Together with a number of tesserae yielding the name of the god Arsu, an inscription was found in a building that since then has been referred to as the temple of Arsu (Will 1983: 76, note 17). The text has recently been published by al-Asad and Teixidor (1985a: 286). It is inscribed on an altar, the dimensions of which have not yet been released. However, as it refers to more than one specimen, it is considered to describe a major dedication.

byrḥ ʾlwl šnt 300 +
75 ʿlwtʾ ʾl[n]
qrb brʿʾ br mqymw br
twry br brʿʾ dy mn bny
mtbwl lʾrṣw wlqsmyʾ
[w]lbntʾl ʾlhyʾ ṭbyʾ ʿl
ḥyy mqymw ʾbwhy wḥywhy
wḥyy bnwhy wʾḥwhy

Translation: In the month Elul of the year 375 (= 63 AD) Baraa son of Moqaimu son of Tawrai son of Baraa who belongs to the Beni Mattibol has offered these altars to Arsu and to Qismaia and to the Daughters of El, the good gods, for the life of Moqaimu, his father, and the life of himself and the life of his sons and brothers.[20]

Except for 'Moqaimu' the personal names are rare in Palmyra. Apart from this one, the first dated occurrence of 'Baraa' is in 118 AD, almost

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son of Lekaishu in order to honour him in 84 AD. This bilingual inscription describes Abgar as a *good citizen and well-disposed towards his own fatherland*, ἀγαθὸν πολείτην καὶ εὔνουν πρὸς τὴν ἰδίαν πατρίδα, rendered in Aramaic by the phrase *because he has pleased them* (i.e. the members of the city-council), *bdyl dy špr lhwn*. The inscription was found in the northern portico of the temple of Bel. Once again, the relationship between the Beni Mita and Bel's temple is attested. However, 'Abgar' and the other names appearing in his genealogy are rare in Palmyrene onomastics. Moreover, the inscriptions bearing them should be dated at least 50 years later than this one. Whilst the inscription confirms that certain members were deeply involved in civic matters, it does not cast further light on the Beni Mita.

[20] Cf. al-Asad and Teixidor (1985a) and Gawlikowski (1990b) for a discussion of the deities occurring in this inscription. The suggestion that *qsmyʾ* is a composite name retaining Edomite Qos, *qs* or *qws*, may also be considered.

50 years later (CIS II: 4163). It reports the building of a tomb by *Baraa and Borepha, sons of Rabbel son of Baraa.* Considering the chronological difference between the two inscriptions, it is possible that grandfather Baraa in CIS II: 4163 is the dedicator of the altars alluded to in the inscription cited above. Rabbel, his son, would then be one of the anonymous beneficiaries. However, CIS II: 4163 does not mention the Beni Mattibol.

The excavation of the temple of Arsu seems to confirm the relationship between this deity and the Beni Mattibol. This had already been postulated by Milik (DFD: 29), on account of the frequency with which Arsu serves as a theophorous element in the personal names of individuals belonging to this tribe.[21]

Several funerary texts mention persons belonging to the Beni Mattibol. CIS II: 4113 and 4115, dated to 9 and 40 AD respectively, are drafted in Palmyrene. *Inv.*VII: 3, dated to 89 AD, is in Greek. *Inv.*VII: 5 and CIS II: 4187, dated to 159 and 166 AD respectively, are bilingual. In addition, it may be assumed that the persons mentioned in CIS II: 4188, 4189, 4190 and 4191, all found in the same monument as CIS II: 4187, also belong to the Beni Mattibol. However, none of them can be satisfactorily related to Baraa son of Moqaimu. A small number of honorific inscriptions referring to the Beni Mattibol are also inconclusive in this respect. The oldest ones, both bilingual, are inscribed on a socle designed to carry two statues, one of the father and one of the son, which was found in the temple of Bel, but not *in situ* (*Inv.*IX: 6). The oldest, CIS II: 3925 (= *Inv.*IX: 6b) dated to 17 AD, reports the erection of a statue of *Azizu son of Yedibel Barkai who belongs to the Beni Mattibol.* Yedibel, his son erected it. The other, CIS II: 3924 (= *Inv.*IX: 6a) dated to 18 AD, refers to the erection of a statue of *Yedibel son of Azizu son of Yedibel who belongs to the Beni Mattibol* by the Palmyrene and Greek merchants dwelling in Seleucia. In both the Greek text describes the honoured as Παλμυρηνός before stating that he belongs to the Beni Mattibol. Again, it is suggested that the 'city' was already perceived as constituting a unifying concept and, therefore, an appropriate frame of reference for members of the different tribes at the beginning of the first century AD. However, the indication may have been meant to suit outsiders, who, unable to read Aramaic, were unaware of the identity of the tribal elements composing Palmyrene society.

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[21] CIS II: 3975 describes the dedicator, Rabbel son of Amrisha, as belonging to the Beni Mattibol and simultaneously identifies the divine recipient as Arsu. It is inscribed on the fragment of a small altar for burning frankincense, not unlike those dedicated to the 'Anonymous God'. However, its exact provenance is unknown.

The most striking piece of information in CIS II: 3924, recorded in both Greek and Palmyrene, is the motive for erecting the statue of Yedibel. It is claimed that he made a memorable contribution to the temple of Bel.[22] Like the members of the Beni Mita, then, at least one prominent member of the Beni Mattibol was involved in the affairs of the temple of Bel. This strengthens the impression that the temple of Bel was intimately associated with the development of Palmyra as a 'city'. It came to represent symbolically the unity of the city because all the different tribes were involved in its affairs (Schlumberger 1971: 128f). This may have been achieved by allowing other deities to be venerated in the temple regardless of whether or not they had a temple of their own.

Apart from the indications for the worship of Bolastor in Bel's temple, CIS II: 3974 illustrates this point. The inscription, found in the wall of an arch in the temple of Bel, is attached to a relief representing two mounted gods, one on horse and one on camel. They turn towards the dedicator who is positioned beside an altar. The precise dating of the relief is problematic. The inscription only yields the figure 25. Obviously, the signs for indicating '100' have been omitted. Consequently, the relief may be dated to 325, 425 or 525 Seleucid Era, corresponding to 13, 113 or 213 AD. 325 Seleucid Era is thought to be too early. On stylistic grounds Milik (DFD: 22), following Ingholt, favours 525 as does *RES*, no. 30. However, the relief was not found *in situ*. If, 525 is its date, it fulfilled the purpose for which it was designed for about 45 years, an extremely short period of time. Therefore, as CIS II assumes, a date of 425 may be proposed. The question arises, however, whether the relief was originally placed in the precinct of the temple of Bel or in a temple for the worship of Azizu. Considering that the temple of Bel, like that of the main sanctuary in Hatra, allowed for many different activities including the worship of other deities, it probably was approximately found *in situ*.

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[22] The interpretation of ll.4–5 of the Palmyrene part is problematic. The suggested reading is 4.*[bdyl dy]* 5.*qm wšmš bmgd' r[b' lbt' dy bl]*. The corresponding Greek part has ἐπεὶ [κατεσπο]ύδασεν εἰς τὴν [κτίσιν τ]οῦ ναοῦ Βήλου, usually rendered as *because he displayed a great zeal for the construction of the temple of Bel. qm* at the beginning of l.5 is not given in the Greek text. The solution suggested by CIS II, viz. to consider *qm* as *qm bršhwn*, "il était à leur tête", abbreviated, is the most appropriate, at present. Yedibel, either was literally in charge of a caravan guiding the dedicators, the Palmyrenes and Greeks of Seleucia, through the desert or figuratively acted as a patron.

> *lʾrṣw wlʿzyzw ʾlhyʾ ṭbyʾ wskryʾ ʿbd bʿly*
> *br yrḥbwlʾ ʾpklʾ dy ʿzyzw ʾlhʾ ṭbʾ*
> *wrḥmnʾ ʿl ḥywhy wḥyʾ ʾḥwhy byrḥ tšry*
> *šnt 25*
> *dkyr yrḥy glwpʾ*
>
> *Translation:* For Arsu and for Azizu, the good and rewarding gods, has made Baalai son of Yarhibola, the priest of Azizu, the good and merciful god, for the life of himself and the life of his brothers. In the month Tishri of the year 25. May Yarhai, the sculptor, be remembered.

Conspicuously, the object of dedication, the relief, is not mentioned in the text. Apart from this inscription, the dedicator is not otherwise known, especially since the personal name 'Baalai' is rare in Palmyra. He does not identify himself by a particular tribe. Since Arsu is one of the divine recipients here, the dedicator may have belonged to the Beni Mattibol. However, he describes himself as *the priest of Azizu*. Whether those who worship Arsu as an independent deity are identical with or entertain close relations with those who worship Arsu and Azizu as a pair is not known.

> The Beni Mattibol are mentioned on two more occasions. CIS II: 3915 relates that *the Beni Kumra and the Beni Mattibol have made a statue for Hashash son of Nesha son of Bolha Hashash, because he has guided them and has made peace among them.*[23] It is dated to 333 (= 21 AD) and was found in the southern portico of the temple of Bel. Nearby, two others, both dated to 336 (= 24 AD), honouring Hashash' brother Malku (*Inv*.IX: 11 and 12) were unearthed. Apparently, Malku and Hashash belonged to an important family or clan called 'Hashash' which

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[23] CIS II presents it as a bilingual inscription, but Cantineau has convincingly demonstrated that this is erroneous (*Inv*.IX: 13). The Greek text belongs to *Inv*.IX: 11 reporting the erection of a statue in honour of a brother of Hashash, viz. Malku. Greek Μάλιχον Νεσᾶ τοῦ Βωλάα τοῦ ἐπικαλουμένου ʼΑσάσου suits Palmyrene *mlkw br nšʾ br bwlḥʾ dy mtqrʾ ḥšš* (*Inv*.IX: 11) better than *ḥšš br nšʾ br bwlḥʾ ḥšš* (CIS II: 3915). The inscriptions were found in each other's immediate vicinity. Conceiving of the phrase *dy mtqrʾ ḥšš* of *Inv*.IX: 11 as a nickname exclusively relating to Malku, Cantineau insists that only one person is concerned. Following Milik's (DFD: 306) comments on CIS II: 3978, it may be suggested that *ḥšš* denotes a clan or family within the Beni Kumra. Otherwise it has to be assumed that in CIS II: 3915 Malku is indicated twice by his nickname: *ḥšš br nšʾ br bwlḥʾ ḥšš*. Similarly, *Inv*.IX: 12 drops the expression *dy mtqrʾ* when referring to Malku: *mlkw br nšʾ br bwlḥʾ ḥšš*. Malku (*Inv*.IX: 11 and *Inv*.IX: 12) and Hashash (CIS II: 3915 = *Inv*.IX: 13) simply are brothers.

constituted a subdivision of the Beni Kumra. *Inv.*IX: 12 reports the erection of a statue of Malku by the *city-treasurers*, *ʾnwš ʿnwštʾ*, ʾαργυροτομίαι, and *the community of Palmyrenes*, *gbl tdmryʾ*, Παλμυρηνῶν ὁ δῆμος. Although it is not explicitly stated, they obviously intended to honour him. In Palmyrene the gesture is motivated *because he pleased them and their city and the house of their gods*, *mn dy špr lhwn wlmḥwzhwn wlbt ʾlhyhwn*, whereas the Greek notes that it was *for benevolence*, εὐνοίας ἕνεκα. The *gbl tdmryʾ* constituted the major civic institution comprising representatives from all the different tribes prior to the administrative reorganization when it was replaced by the *bwlʾ wdms*. *The house of their gods* refers to the temple of Bel. As a prominent member of the Beni Kumra, Malku son of Nesha contributed considerably to the civic or urban appearance of Palmyra in general and to the establishment of the temple of Bel in particular. This is substantiated by *Inv.*IX: 11, which refers to the erection of a statue *in honour of*, *lyqrh*, the same Malku by *all the merchants who dwell in the city of Babel*, *t[g]ryʾ klhwn dy bmdyntʾ bbl*. It is motivated *because he pleased them in every single respect*, *mn dy špr lhwn bkl gns klh*, supplemented by *and (because) he assisted in the construction of the temple of Bel by giving from his pocket like none has done*, *wʿ[d]r bnynʾ dy h[y]klʾ dy bl wyhb mn kysh dy lʾ ʿbdh ʾnš*.[24] Once again this information is rendered in Greek succinctly by εὐνοίας ἕνεκα. These inscriptions also suggest that many tribal groups participated in the construction of the temple of Bel. The Beni Kumra may be added to those which have been alluded to previously. It is noteworthy that Malku and Hashash, sons of Nesha, were influential members of the tribal élite when Germanicus paid his visit to the city. Malku was a succesful entrepreneur, whereas Hashash played a major role in Palmyrene politics. He managed to establish peace between two rivalling groups, although he himself belonged to one of them. Therefore, a special relationship may be proposed between the Beni Kumra and the Beni Mattibol.

The other inscription mentioning the Beni Mattibol is engraved on the drum of a column found in the gardens surrounding the source Efqa (Cantineau 1930: 25). Five lines are legible; the first line and the end are, however, largely missing. Thus, the date (l.1) cannot exactly be established. Cantineau (1930: 25) suggests reading either 362 (= 50 AD) or 382 (= 70 AD). It is related that *all the Palmyrene merchants who dwell in Spasinou Charax erected a statue of Zabdibol son of Abihan son of Zabdibol son of Lishamsh son of Makkena, the elder, who belongs to the tribe of the Beni Mattibol*, *ṣlmʾ dnh dy zbdbwl br ʾbyhn br zbdbwl br lšmš br mknʾ rbʾ dy mn pḥd bny mtbwl dy ʾqymw lh tgryʾ tdmryʾ*

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[24] "w" preceding *yhb* is *waw-explicativum.*

> *dy bʾsp[s]nqrṭ klhn.* Unfortunately the motivation for erecting the statue has been erased. The personal names in the genealogy are either so common (e.g. Zabdibol and Lishamsh), or so rare (e.g. Abihan and Makkena) in Palmyra that they hardly contribute to the identification of the honoured (Stark 1971). This imparts the observation that the contacts which the city of Palmyra entertained with other emporia along the trade-route along the Euphrates may have been determined by tribal efforts. Especially since a member of the Beni Kumra was linked with the merchants in Babel and further a member of the Beni Mattibol is presented as being involved in the affairs of Spasinou Charax.

Although it is inscribed on an altar of modest dimensions designed for burning frankincense which was found in the vicinity of Diocletian's Camp situated in the north-west of Palmyra, CIS II: 3978 refers to another major dedication.

> *[b]yrḥ ʾlwl šnt 396*
> *ḥmnʾ dnh wʿltʾ dh*[25]
> *[ʿ]bdw wqrbw lšmš wzbydʾ*
> *bny mlkw br ydyʿbl br nšʾ*
> *dy mtqrʾ br ʿbdbl dy mn*
> *pḥd bny mgrt lšmš*
> *ʾlh byt ʾbwhn ʿl*
> *ḥyyhwn wḥyy ʾḥyh[wn]*
> *wbnyhwn*
>
> *Translation:* In the month Elul of the year 396 (= September 85 AD) Lishamsh and Zebaida sons of Malku son of Yedibel son of Nesha who is also known as Bar-Abdibel who belong to the tribe of the Beni Migrat have made and offered for Shamash the god of the house of their fathers this temple and this altar for the life of themselves and the life of their brothers and sons.

At first sight, this is one of the rare examples establishing a direct link between a deity and a particular tribal group, if Milik's (DFD: 306) suggestion that the latter, designated here as *house of their fathers*, *byt ʾb*, were known as the Beni Abdibel, a subdivision of the Beni Migrat, is given credit. However, the phrase *ʾlh byt ʾb* may just be one of Shamash' epithets. CIS II: 3979, a damaged bilingual text inscribed on a small altar found near the temple of Bel, describes the divine recipient in Greek as ʽΗλίῳ πατρῴῳ. Another Greek inscription that was engraved on the drum of a column reused in a later structure and dated by Gawlikowski (1973: 100) to 272 AD, describes the building to which it originally belonged as τὸν πάρινον ʽΗλίου πατρῴ ου. Milik's suggestion that *br ʿbdbl* (1.5) refers to a subdivision of the Beni Migrat may be correct, but his opinion that this clan is described here as a *byt ʾb* is questionable. The temple which is referred to is not the first dedicated to Shamash in Palmyra. A mutilated inscription engraved on a slab of limestone that was reused in a later structure in the north-western part of the city likewise refers to a *ḥmnʾ* for Shamash (Gawlikowski 1976a: 198). It is dated to 282 (= 30 BC). Unfortunately, only the name of the dedicator remains causing it to be uncertain as to whether there is a relationship between the dedicator of this inscription and the ones of the later temple. The worship of Shamash, then, cannot be definitely attributed to one and the same tribal group over an extensive period of time from the available data. Meanwhile, together with Allat and Baalshamin and a couple of minor deities, Shamash seems to have been popular particularly amongst tribal groups of Arab stock (Gawlikowski 1973: 101ff; idem 1976a; idem 1990b: 2642ff). From the evidence at hand, the Beni Migrat rarely appear in Palmyra, being found only on one other occasion, on a tessera referring to a banquet in honour of Bel (RTP, no. 105). In Greek the name features in the heavily mutilated funerary inscription CIS II: 4120, dated to 58 AD, as φ[υλῆ]ς Μαγερηνῶν (DFD: 306; Gawlikowski 1973: 37). Most of the other names in this inscription are erased. Milik (DFD: 305f) links the builders of this tomb with those of CIS II: 4167, apparently a different branch of the Beni Migrat. Excepting 'Lishamsh' none of the names in the respective genealogies correspond with that in CIS II: 3978.

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[25] Cf. for the interpretation of *ḥmnʾ*: Drijvers (1988).

On top of Jebel Muntar at the south-western end of the ancient city-wall which should be dated around the turn of the Era (Gawlikowski 1973: 16f), is a small temple dedicated to Belhammon.[26] *Inv.*XII: 48 is inscribed in three lines on the lintel.

> *lblḥmwn ʿbdw mn kyshwn mqymw br mqymw br zbdbwl ʿrym wyrḥbwlʾ br mlkw br lšmš br ḥnbl ʾʿby hyklʾ dnh wʾsṭwʾ*

---

[26] Cf. for an assessment of the data concerning Belhammon in Palmyra: Xella (1991: 192–203).

> *dy šyšʾ dy qdmwhy wʾsṭwʾ dy lʿlmnh wtṭlylʾ klh wtrʿwhy wšrgbʾ*
> *dy nḥšʾ wʾp qrbw hyklʾ dy mnwt wʾsṭwwhy wtṣbyth*[27]
> *klh ʿl ḥyyhwn wḥyy bnyhwn wʾḥyhw[n] lʿlmʾ byrḥ ʾyr šnt 400*
>
> *Translation:* For Belhammon Moqaimu son of Moqaimu son of Zabdibol Arima and Yarhibola son of Malku son of Lishamsh son of Hannibel Aabai have made from their own pockets this temple as well as the marble portico in front of it and the portico on top of it and the entire roof and its gate and the bronze *šrgb*. And also they have offered the temple of Manawat and its porticoes and all its ornamentation for the life of themselves and the life of their sons and their brothers for ever. In the month Iyyar of the year 400 (= May 89 AD).

The same dedicators co-operated in offering a number of statues representing Moqaimu son of Moqaimu Arima and his sons (Cantineau 1930: 26). The first dedicator, Moqaimu, is said to *have made and built* a number of *statues and their niches in honour of his father Moqaimu and his br(others) in the month Ab of the year 390* (= August 78 AD) (*Inv*.XI: 81). Next to a statue of his father, indicated as Moqaimu the Elder, Moqaimu probably erected three others representing his brothers. The inscription calls them Zabdibol, Malku and Borepha. They may be counted among the beneficiaries of the dedication of the temples of Belhammon and Manawat.

> *Inv*.VIII: 71, inscribed on a slab of stone found in the temple of Bel but without doubt originally belonging to a tomb, also mentions Moqaimu the Elder. Although it is rather damaged at the beginning, the inscription probably reports that Moqaimu built a tomb for *himself and his sons and his brothers and for Zabdibol, his father, in order to honour him.*

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[27] The interpretation of *šrgbʾ* is problematic. According to Dupont-Sommer it designates "le mur du bassin d'airain" (du Mesnil du Buisson 1966: 188). Following Starcky, Gawlikowski (1973: 84) identifies it as "la cupule en bronze d'un autel à feu de dimensions monumentales". Teixidor (*BES* 1968: 380f) conceives of it as a "mur (ou paroi) latéral(e)". Aggoula (1979: 117) prefers the reading *šdgbʾ* denoting the "base, support" of a "hydrie ou bassin". Excepting Teixidor, all the suggestions imply a cult-object. Given that the text is inscribed on the lintel and that otherwise only architectural features of the building are referred to, *šrgbʾ* may designate an architectural device. Its insertion in the text immediately after *trʿwhy* may imply that it refers to the metal work of the gate. However, a sound linguistical derivation cannot be given at present. Instead of *trʿwhy*, *Inv*.XII: 49 inscribed on a console found in the debris of the same temple and largely reproducing *Inv*.XII: 48—the inscription is slightly damaged at the top and on the left—, has *mlbnh* which is thought to designate the frame of the gate (*BES* 1968: 380f).

Conspicuously, the genealogy of Moqaimu is recorded as *mqymw br zbdb[wl]* BR *ʿrym[ʾ]*, whereas in *Inv*.XI: 81 and *Inv*.XII: 48 *br* designating Zabdibol as a son of Arima is omitted. If ‘Arima’ and ‘Aabai’ in *Inv*.XII: 48 indicate subdivisions of the tribe to which the dedicators belonged, then *br* either describes Zabdibol as a genuine son of Arima in *Inv*.VIII: 71, entailing that the illustrious founding-father of the clan should not be relegated to the distant past. Or, it is used both descriptively and classificatory in one and the same genealogy, meaning that after the presentation of his parentage Moqaimu is subsequently described as a member of the ‘Beni Arima’. Given that in *Inv*.XII: 48 Yarhibola’s genealogy outnumbers that of Moqaimu by one generation, the former suggestion is more probable. The relatively short existence of the ‘Beni Arima’ as an independent clan may explain why there is no need to telescope the genealogies. Unlike Cantineau (1930: 26) which summarizes Moqaimu’s genealogy to *mqymw br mqymw ʿrymʾ*, space allows for its full representation. Yarhibola’s genealogy nevertheless is telescoped. A bilingual text (*Inv*.X: 131) dated to August 80 AD and inscribed on a console found in the agora names the father of Yarhibola. In the Palmyrene part, his genealogy is *mlkw br lšmš br ḥnbl br brʿth ʾʿby*, whereas the Greek only yields Μάλιχον Λισάμσου τοῦ Ἐλαβηλου τοῦ Ἀαβει. Yarhibola’s genealogy, then, is increased by one generation. The word *br*, however, is conspicuously absent before *ʾʿby*. In contrast with Arima, therefore, Aabai should be consigned to the distant past as a founding-father of the clan named after him. It would seem that the clan known as ‘Aabai’ is older than the one known as ‘Arima’. The close co-operation between two people each belonging to one of the two tribes, suggests that the ‘Beni Arima’ are a fissured part of the ‘Beni Aabai’. Another member of the ‘Beni Aabai’ features in CIS II: 3963 (= *Inv*.X: 47). This bilingual inscription, probably dated to the beginning of the second century AD, is engraved on a console found in the agora. It refers to a nephew of Yarhibola, since the genealogy of the person honoured is given as *tymrṣw br [l]šmš br mlkw ʾʿb[y]*. Taimarsu is honoured by *the members of a caravan*, *bny šyrtʾ*, *because he pleased them and helped them in every single respect*, *[bd]yl dy špr lhwn wʿdrn[nwn] bkl ṣbw klh*. Remarkably, the Greek part does not explicitly mention the motivation behind the gesture. Instead, it describes Taimarsu as *pious and loving his fatherland*, εὐσεβῆ καὶ φιλόπατρ[ιν]. Apparently, these qualities were perceived to render his efforts to the benefit of the members of the expedition adequately. However, Taimarsu’s father Lishamsh is a beneficiary of the dedication of the temples of Belhammon and Manawat.[28]

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[28] As a final qualification ‘Aabai’ appears more often at the end of genealogies. CIS II: 4456, 4457, 4458 and perhaps 4459, all funerary inscriptions, present descendants of

According to *Inv*.VIII: 71 Moqaimu's father, Moqaimu, belongs to the tribe of the Beni Agrud, *dy [mn] pḥd b[ny] ʿgrwd*. Consequently, both dedicators of *Inv*.XII: 48 must belong to this tribe. Moqaimu is naturally directly related to it. If it is correct that the 'Beni Arima' are a fissured part of the 'Beni Aabai', then Yarhibola must belong to it as well. If a member of the 'Beni Arima' belongs to the Beni Agrud, then automatically any member of the 'Beni Aabai' belongs to it. Another indirect link between the 'Beni Aabai' and the Beni Agrud is found in *Inv*.X: 131. This inscription states that the initiative for the erection of a statue in honour of Yarhibola's father Malku originated from the Beni Agrud, *bny ʿgrwd*, ʼΑγρουδηνοῖ. From their association on a number of tesserae, it has been observed that the Beni Agrud entertained a special relation with Belhammon (DFD: 233ff; Gawlikowski 1973: 39f; idem 1990b: 2624; Teixidor 1979: 12ff; Xella 1991: 199f). In addition, two tesserae apparently refer to a son of Yarhibola by the name of Shalman. He is described as a *symposiarch*, *rb mrzḥʾ* and is among the beneficiaries of the dedication of the temples of Belhammon and Manawat.

If the suggestions made by both Teixidor (1979: 15) and Gawlikowski (1990b: 2624) that Belhammon should be identified with Bel or, even that he is but a manifestation of Bel (Xella 1991: 202), are correct, then the Beni Agrud, like the other Palmyrene tribes, were involved in the affairs of the temple of Bel. Two dedicatory inscriptions, both reused in a later structure, which were found in the precinct of the temple of Bel, can be related to Belhammon. The first (*Inv*.XI: 99) mentions *bl blḥmwn wmnwt* as divine recipients. It is noteworthy that between *bl* and *blḥmwn* the copulativum "w" is absent. Teixidor (1979: 12f) and Xella (1991: 198) point to the fact that the same phenomenon occurs in a Latin inscription from Sarmizegetusa in Dacia. It is possible that *bl* does not refer to the deity of that name, but indicates Belhammon's heavenly origin. The most appropriate translation would then be *the god*. The other inscription (*Inv*.XI: 46) mentions Manawat as a divine recipient. Considering the close relationship

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Taimarsu (CIS II: 3963). Their genealogies largely coincide with that of Taimarsu. The genealogies in CIS II: 3988 and 3990 cannot be plausibly linked with those in inscriptions referred to so far, although they end with 'Aabai'. Presumably they describe members of different branches of the 'Beni Aabai'. Furthermore, 'Aabai' appears on four tesserae. Three of them may be linked with Yarhibola from the foundation-inscription of the temples of Belhammon and Manawat. RTP 770a refers to again another branch of the clan (Stark 1971: 6).

between Belhammon and Manawat (Teixidor 1979: 12ff), this inscription may illustrate the closeness of Bel and Belhammon.

CIS II: 3973 is a tantalizing inscription engraved on an altar found slightly east of the temple of Bel. It commemorates the dedication of two altars.

[t]rtn ʿlwtʾ ʾln ʿbd ʿbydw br ʿnmw
[br] šʿdlt nbṭyʾ rwḥy[ʾ] dy hwʾ prš
[b]ḥyrtʾ wbmšrytʾ dy ʿnʾ
lšyʿʾlqwm ʾlhʾ ṭbʾ wškrʾ dy lʾ
štʾ ḥmr ʿl ḥywhy wḥyy mʿyty
wʿbdw ʾḥwhy wšʿdlt brh byrḥ
ʾlwl šnt 443 wdkyr zbydʾ br
[š]mʿwn br blʿqb gyrh wrḥmh qdm
šyʿʾlqwm ʾlhʾ ṭbʾ wdkyr kl
mʿyd ʿlwtʾ ʾln wʾmr dkyryn
[h]ʾ ʾln klhwn bṭb

Translation: These two altars Obaidu son of Animu son of Shadilat, a Nabataean of the Rawwaha, who has been a cavalry-soldier at Hirta and in the camp of Ana, has made for Shaialqaum, the good and rewarding god who does not drink any wine, for the life of himself and the life of Meaiti and Abdu, his brothers, and Shadilat, his son. In the month Elul of the year 443 (= September 132 AD). And may Zebaida son of Shimeon son of Belaqab, his host and his friend, be remembered before Shaialqaum, the good god. And may whoever frequents these altars and says: May all these be remembered, be remembered for good.

The inscription provides a considerable amount of information about the dedicator. He served as a horse-soldier in a Palmyrene military detachment stationed along the trade-route on the Euphrates. He describes himself as *a Nabataean* from the tribe *of the Rawwaha.* His status as a foreigner is enhanced by the fact that the names in his genealogy and the names of the beneficiaries, who are related to him, are very rare in Palmyrene onomastics. By contrast, the names in the genealogy of *his host and his friend* (ll.7–8) are extremely common (Stark: 1971). The divine recipient is an outsider in the Palmyrene pantheon. In fact, his name occurs only once more, in an inscription from the Hawran which is dated to the 26th year of the Nabataean king Rabbel II or 96 AD (Cantineau 1978b: 20). Shaialqaum probably belongs to the Nabataean pantheon.[29] This would corroborate with the dedicator's description that he is a *Nabataean*. Teixidor (1979: 85ff) observes that Obaidu is a member of a family or clan that was prominently present in Salkhad in the Hawran. This may explain why he explicitly states that he is a *Nabataean*. By the time that the dedication was executed, the Nabataean Empire had ceased to exist as a political entity for some 25 years. It is hard to fathom why one would describe himself as such. Only very few direct indications of a Nabataean presence have been found in Palmyra. Nevertheless, Teixidor (1973) observes that relations between tribal groups that formerly considered themselves as Nabataeans on the one and the city of Palmyra on the other hand must have been intensive, especially if these groups inhabited regions to the west of the city like the Hawran.[30] The very nature of the Nabataean Empire as a loose confederation of tribal groups (Knauf 1986) would explain the lack of explicitness. Perhaps, the collapse of the Nabataean Empire incited tribal groups to act as independent entities again, with the result that their members felt free not to describe themselves as Nabataean, but to use only the name of the tribal group to which they belonged. The highest élite circles of the former Nabataean Empire, however, derived much of their status from the leading position which they had acquired. Therefore, their inclination to persist in describing themselves as Nabataean may have been more engrained.

It is a tantalizing question why the dedicator's *host and friend* is not included among the beneficiaries of the dedication which mentions only his brothers and son.[31] The restriction to siblings and immediate offspring fully accords with the Palmyrene perception and employment of the formula as far as major objects of dedication are concerned. The meaning of a dedication *for the life of* was perceived to be different from that of a *dkyr*-text, despite the fact that on a connotative level the former performs a number of functions quite similar to those of the latter. It might be argued that Shaialqaum is incited to bestow 'life' on the dedicator's brothers and son, but that the acting entity of *dkyr* (1.7) is the beholder of the dedication and the reader of the inscription. The latter is evoked to intercede for Zebaida with Shaialqaum (Schottroff 1964: 79f).[32] Presumably for his hospitality, Obaidu prefers to express explicitly the wish that Zebaida is hailed by his fellow-citizens. In order to ensure this, as a reward for everyone who responds to his appeal, he summons the reader to hail equally such a person. The act of dedication is presented as mainly a private matter, but the wish that *whoever frequents these altars and says: May all these be remembered, be remembered for good* acts to ensure the remembrance of Zebaida. Considering that the dedicator belonged to the Nabataean élite, the qualification of Zebaida as *his host and friend* indicates that their relationship was governed by principles of *hospitium.*[33]

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[29] The qualification of Shaialqaum as *he who does not drink any wine* is enigmatic if his worship manifested itself in the Hawran. This region was renowned for the growing of grapes. Teixidor (1979: 86) may be correct in associating the description with the nomadic past of the Nabataeans. His justification by referring to the account of Diodorus Siculus, however, is questionable (cf. Appendix A). The Nabataeans, especially the members of its élite, were largely sedentarized in the first century AD. Consequently, it is doubtful whether cults intrinsically linked with a nomadic past persisted in its original manifestations.

[30] There is one more Palmyrene inscription referring to a Nabataean presence. CIS II: 3991 inscribed on a small altar for burning frankincense, mentions *Saabu, the god, also known as the Gad of the Nabataeans*, *ʾlh ṣʿb[w] dy mqrʾ gdʾ [ʾ]nbṭw* as a divine recipient (cf. Appendix B).

[31] A similar problem appears in *Inv*.XII: 45, although the formula *ʿl ḥyy* is absent. The intention of the dedication seems to be similar. In fact, the question is even more tantalizing, since the beneficiaries listed after the formula are not restricted to *the dedicator*

Another intriguing inscription originates from the temple of Nabu situated at the south-eastern end of the 'Great Colonnade' between the theatre and the temple of Bel. It is very well preserved and mentions one of builders of the temple (Bounni and Saliby 1965: 127; DFD: 162). Unfortunately, its relation to the object to which it was attached is not explicitly mentioned. The reference to a statue (1.1), however, suggests that it belongs to a console or basis.

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himself and his sons and brothers. Instead *Inv*.XII: 45 mentions *the dedicator himself, his sons and his grandsons* (!) *and the Seven of Wadd*—probably a college of priests consisting of a fixed number—. The inscription ends with *May be remembered before the Merciful, Saad son of Nabuzabd Saad, his friend, dkyr qdm rḥmn' ṣʿd br nbwzbd ṣʿd rḥmh. His friend* presumably describes Saad as the dedicator's patron. In this case also, a non-relative on whom the dedicator depends in one way or another is mentioned separately.

[32] Schottroff's (1964: 73f) suggestion that Aramaic *mn qdm* equals Hebrew *lpny yhwh*, "in Gegenwart Jahwes" as a description referring to the situation in a sanctuary and his observation that the expression *dkyr . . . mn qdm* should be conceived of as "ein Gedenken in der Gegenwart der Gottheit, die Fürbitte" is very apt. However, the act is not restricted to a sanctuary, but may be performed wherever the deity in question was perceived to reside, for example in the vicinity of an altar dedicated to him. Schottroff's (1964: 74) other suggestion that Aramaic *dkyr . . . mn qdm* equals Hebrew *nzkr lpny yhwh* (Numbers 10: 9) in which Yahweh is the subject of the verbal form *nzkr*, the acting entity who remembers, should be rejected.

[33] Cf. Chapter 1.

> *ṣlm’ dnh dy mqymw br nbwzbd*
> *br bryky ʿbšy dy ’qymw lh*[34]
> *bnwhy lyqrh wʿbd mqymw dnh*
> *ʿmwd’ dnh wšryth wtṭlylh*
> *lnbw ’lh’ ṭb’ wškr’ ʿl ḥywhy*
> *wḥyy bnwhy byrḥ nysn šnt*
> *457*
>
> *Translation:* This is the statue of Moqaimu son of Nabuzabd son of Barikai Abshai which his sons have erected for him so as to honour him. And this Moqaimu has made this column and its deck-beam and its roof for Nabu, the good and rewarding god, for the life of himself and the life of his sons. In the month Nisan of the year 457 (= April 146 AD).

The inscription is basically concerned with the erection of a statue of Moqaimu son of Nabuzabd to which the date probably refers. It is even suggested that Moqaimu’s dedication *for the life of his sons* incited his sons to erect a statue in honour of him.[35] Like those of *dkyr*, then, the connotations of *lyqr* are quite different from those of the formula *ʿl ḥyy*.

> Apart from the person honoured, the inscription does not mention anyone by name. Consequently, the dedicators of the statue, the beneficiaries of Moqaimu’s previous dedication cannot be identified. The name ‘Abshai’ indicating the clan to which Moqaimu belonged, seldom occurs in Palmyra. Milik (DFD: 162) mentions a tessera possibly presenting the name of one of Moqaimu’s sons: *nbwzbd mqymw* (RTP: no. 306). In addition, a small altar found in Diocletian’s Camp was dedicated to the ‘Anonymous God’ by a certain *[m]lkw br [n]bwzbd mqym*. From its palaeography, it is dated to the second century AD (Gawlikowski 1973: 96; RSP, no. 138). The tessera may refer to one of Moqaimu’s sons, the altar to one of his grandsons. However, if Milik (DFD: 162) is correct, the latter, identified with *[m]lkw br [n]bwzbd br mqymw nṣwr* (*RSP*: 168), may not be a grandson of Moqaimu at all. The clan Malku belonged to is called ‘Nasor’, that of Moqaimu ‘Abshai’.

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[34] *The reading ʿbšy* is uncertain. Bounni and Saliby (1965: 127) only offer a translation without vocalizing the name. Their transliteration of the name is *ʿbsy*. Milik (DFD: 162), however, has *ʿbšy*. Both names occur in Palmyrene onomastics, albeit very rarely (Stark 1971: 42). Milik’s reading which is based on a photograph, may be the more reliable.

[35] *wʿbd* (1.3)—with the “w” as a *waw-explicativum*—might be translated as *because he has made*.

The persons mentioned in the inscription may be associated with those of three inscribed busts found in the *hypogeum* of Shalamallat (Bounni 1961–62: 156f). An inscription dated to April 147 AD reports that Shalamallat's son and the latter's wife ceded a part of the funerary structure to a distant relative. Shalamallat and Barikai, Moqaimu's grandfather, must have been contemporaries, although there is no indication that they were related to each other. Nevertheless, Barikai's family had similarly achieved burial-rights in Shalamallat's tomb. One inscription mentions Moqaimu's grandmother, the mother of his father Nabuzabd, viz. *Aqimat daughter of Hairan son of Bennor, the mother of Nabuzabd Barikai, ʾqmt [b]rt ḥyrn br bnr ʾmh dy nbwzbd bryky.* A second inscription possibly mentions a brother of Moqaimu, viz. *Barikai son of Nabuzabd son of* [*Bar*]*i*[*kai*], *bryky br nbwzbd br [br]y[ky].* The third inscription either refers to a niece of Moqaimu, *Hanna daughter of Barikai Nabuzabd, ḥnʾ brt bryky nbwzbd*, or to the daughter of his brother's son, *daughter of Barikai son of Nabuzabd son of Nabuzabd, brt bryky br nbwzbd br nbwzbd.* These last two inscriptions belong to the same bust. However, compared to the latter, the genealogy of the former cites one generation less. As it is rather common for a generation to disappear, particularly if it occurs at the end of a genealogy, it may be assumed that the latter is more reliable. However, the dedicators of Moqaimu's statue still remain largely unidentified.

Dedications from the temple of Baalshamin

The temple of Baalshamin has yielded a host of honorific and dedicatory inscriptions which are attached to or refer to both major and minor objects of dedication. Those concerned with major objects will be treated first. Only a minority was found *in situ*, although the objects bearing them, such as architraves and columns, often hint at their original location. *Dunant*, nos. 1a en 1b provides a particularly graphic example. Both were engraved on an architrave. The first inscription was found in the debris of a portico in the temple of Baalshamin, the second about 150 m east of it. This inscription appears to have been removed from its original place to be reused in a later structure (Cantineau 1930: 21; *Inv*.I: 5). The inscriptions, each consisting of two lines, are identical.

mṭlʾ dh klh ʿmwdyh wšryth wtṭlylh qrb yrḥy br lšmš br rʿy dy
mn bny mʿzyn lbʿlšmn ʾlhʾ
ṭbʾ wškrʾ ʿl ḥywhy wḥyy bnwhy wʾḥwhy byrḥ ʾlwl šnt 378

> *Translation:* This entire portico, its columns and its deck-beam and its roof, has offered Yarhai son of Lishamsh son of Raai who belongs to the Beni Maazin, to Baalshamin the good and rewarding god, for the life of himself and the life of his sons and his brothers. In the month Elul of the year 378 (= September 67 AD).

The text appears, in an abridged version, five times on as many columns, which were found in the debris of the same portico. It reads: *Yarhai son of Lishamsh son of Raai has offered this entire portico, mṭlʾ dh klh qrb yrḥy br lšmš br rʿy*. The divine recipient and the beneficiaries are only implied. The deletion of the name of the divine recipient is more logical than leaving out the function of the dedication. Indeed, it was common knowledge that the entire sanctuary was dedicated to Baalshamin, whereas the motivation behind the individual expressions of piety is far less obvious. However, the Palmyrene material indicates that the beneficiaries traditionally belonged to the dedicator's close relatives, i.e. his sons and his brothers. Unless explicitly stated otherwise, the beholder would have been aware of this so that he did not have to read the entire inscription. Merely to know the dedicator was sufficient for the rest could be surmised. Dunant (1971: 14) observed that the text on the columns served as a reminder about the monumental building inscription which was engraved in relatively small characters about 6 m high on the architrave. Despite the fact that the inscription was rubricated, it was hardly legible from the ground. Yet, this physical location reinforces our observation about the stereotyped wording of the text and its implications. Moreover, the abridged versions on columns suggest that other short dedicatory inscriptions, especially if they belong to columns, represent a similar phenomenon, excepting that the original is lost.[36]

The dedicator of *Dunant*, no. 1 must have belonged to the city's leading circles. The monumental character of the dedication not only suggests this, but also the seigneurial status of one of his sons (CIS II: 3959 = *Inv*.I: 2). This bilingual inscription, dated to 130 or 131

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[36] Cf. for instance *Dunant*, nos. 5, 6, 15, 16, 17, and 18; *Inv*.V: 9 and 10; *Inv*.XII: 21. The first six were found in the temple of Baalshamin too; the others in the 'Great' and 'Transverse Colonnades'. This complies with Veyne's (1990: 381f) observation concerning the Column of Trajan in Rome. As a monument, the physical appearance of the Column has a meaning all by itself, irrespective of the images of Trajan's life and exploits it carries.

AD, is engraved on a console found *in situ* in the pronaos of the temple of Baalshamin. It honours Male, also known as Agrippa, for his efforts in arranging an appropriate welcome to Hadrian when the Emperor took Palmyra during the late twenties of the second century AD. Male is said to hold the office of γραμματεύς, *grmṭws*, a high municipal function, for the second time and to have embellished the temple of Baalshamin at his own expense. Considering Male's lavishness and brilliance, his father must have occupied a position of similar importance. Male must belong to the beneficiaries of his father's dedication referred to in *Dunant*, nos. 1a and 1b.

The perplexing habit of repeating the dedicator's name on a number of columns enables Dunant to restore a large part of *Dunant*, no. 3. It is inscribed on another architrave from the temple of Baalshamin.[37] The name of the dedicator is found six times on columns and in four cases they are well preserved (*Dunant*, no. 4). Except for the name of the dedicator, *ʿlyšʾ br lšmš br zbdbl*, the inscription does not substantially differ from *Dunant*, no. 1. The date is definitely lost and it can only be postulated whether the dedicator's brothers were explicitly listed as beneficiaries. The names in the dedicator's genealogy, *Alaisha son of Lishamsh son of Zabdibel* frequently occur in Palmyra, but he cannot be satisfactorily identified in relation to any other source.

A similar situation applies to *Dunant*, no. 5 also inscribed on a number of columns from the temple of Baalshamin. It mentions the offering of a portico and thus belongs to the category of monumental dedicatory inscriptions that have been repeated. However, the original is lost. The name and genealogy of the dedicator, *Zabdilah son of Zabdateh Mika*, *zbdlh br zbdʿth mykʾ*, is otherwise only known from a tessera (RTP, no. 830).

Dunant, no. 6 names *Wahbai son of Oge son of Wahbai*, *whby br ʿgʾ br whby*, as the dedicator of *an entire portico, mṭlʾ dh klh*. He can be related to other sources which all originate from the temple of Baalshamin. *Dunant*, no. 7 presents his brother Malku, *mlkw br ʿgʾ br whby br blḥzy*, as having *made and offered* a portico to *Baalshamin and Durahlun, the good and rewarding gods*.[38] Although this inscription is rather damaged, it can be entirely restored with the help of *Dunant*, no. 40. The latter reports that *Baalshamin and Durahlun and the Beni Maazin* erected a statue of Malku to honour him *because he has pleased them and their gods* and also for his contribution to the construction of the temple of Baalshamin. Both *Dunant*, no. 7 and *Dunant*, no. 40 are dated to *Elul of the year* 401 (= September 90 AD). *Dunant*, no. 40 is, therefore, the response to *Dunant*, no. 7. The beneficiaries in *Dunant*, no. 7 are Malku, the dedicator, his sons and his brothers. Since it may be assumed that the beneficiaries of his brother Wahbai's dedication (*Dunant*, no. 6) likewise consisted of the dedicator himself, his sons and his brothers, Malku and Wahbai have bestowed each other with the benefits of their dedications. Another brother of Malku and Wahbai and, therefore, a beneficiary of their dedications also, is named in *Dunant*, no. 43, which is engraved on a console found in the temple of Baalshamin and dated to 415 (= 103 AD).[39] It reports that the Beni Maazin *have made a statue of Belhazai* to honour him, for he and his sons have made a *portico and its columns and its roof*, *mṭlʾ dh wʿmwdyh wtṭlylh*. Presumably, Belhazai had his contribution immortalized with a dedicatory inscription similar to that of his brothers who would certainly belong to the beneficiaries.

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[37] *Dunant*, nos. 8 and 9 are also inscribed on architraves from the temple of Baalshamin. Their state of preservation, however, precludes them from substantially contributing to our discussion.

[38] Durahlun, *He from Rahle*, is a local manifestation of Baalshamin. Rahle is situated in the Hermon mountains south-west of Damascus. This accords very well with the purported 'western' origin of the Beni Maazin, the main worshippers of Baalshamin in Palmyra

Apart from indicating that the brothers blessed each other with dedications, the inscriptions reveal that their family belonged to the richest of Palmyra for each of them dedicated a substantial structure. In addition, it appears that this family comprised only one branch of a wealthy clan of Beni Maazin. *Dunant*, no. 38 engraved on a console from the temple of Baalshamin, refers to the erection of a statue in honour of a certain *Zabba son of Taimna son of Wahbai son of Belhazai who belongs to the tribe of the Beni Maazin*, *zbʾ br tymnʾ br whby b[r] blḥzy dy mn pḥd bny mʿzyn*, by the *priests of Baalshamin*, *kmryʾ dy bʿlš[mn ʾl]hʾ*, *because he has pleased them*, *mn dy špr lhwn*. It is dated to *Siwan* 360 (= June 49). Zabba must be a full cousin of Malku, Wahbai and Belhazai. Thus, forty one years before Malku's recorded involvement, another branch of the clan, with Belhazai the

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(Dunant 1971: 8f; Teixidor 1979: 18–25; Gawlikowski 1990b: 2630). As Dunant points out, however, the fact that a number of texts juxtapose Baalshamin and Durahlun, indicates that they were not perceived as entirely identical.

[39] Belhazai's genealogy is: *blḥzy br ʿgʾ br whby bwlḥzy*. Referring to the founding-father, *bwlḥzy* might be the name of the clan. Instead of his brother, Belhazai might be a grandson of Wahbai (*Dunant*, no. 6). His full genealogy then is: *blḥzy br ʿgʾ br whby br ʿgʾ br whby br bwlḥzy*. The inscription may testify to the continuing engagement of the family in the affairs of this temple.

Elder as a founding-father, substantially contributed to the accommodations of the temple of Baalshamin.[40]

CIS II: 3983 (= *Inv*.I: 4 = *Dunant*, no. 13), is inscribed on an architrave found not far from the temple of Baalshamin. It reports the *offering of five columns and their deck-beam and their roof to Baalshamin, the good and rewarding god* by a certain *Zabdai son of Zabdnabu Qahzan who belongs to the Beni Maazin*, *zbdy br zbdnbw qḥzn dy mn bny mʿzyn*. It is dated to *Elul* 378 (= September 67 AD), and its beneficiaries are, as usual, the dedicator himself, his sons and his brothers. However, the name and genealogy of the dedicator do not appear elsewhere.

Dunant, no. 14 is inscribed on an architrave. It records that *three columns and their deck-beam and their roof have been made and offered* by *Malku son of Alaisha son of Malku Asra*, *ml[kw br ʿlyšʾ br] mlkw ʾṣrʿ*, *who belongs to the Beni Maazin*. Malku dedicates his contribution to *Baalshamin and Durahlun, the good and rewarding gods for the life of himself and the life of his sons and his brothers*.[41] It is dated to *Elul* 378 (= September 67 AD). Its main contents, the nature of the dedication and the name of the dedicator, are repeated on a column (*Dunant*, no. 15). The clan-indication 'Asra' does occur elsewhere (Stark 1971: 6), but the persons indicated cannot directly be related to the dedicator of *Dunant*, nos. 14 and 15. A tessera, RTP, no. 351b, may mention Malku's father Alaisha for it reads *ʿlyšʾ mlkw* (Stark 1971: 45).

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[40] More members of this clan are mentioned in *Inv*.VIII: 26 and 59 and *MFP*: 217, nos. 46 and 47, all funerary inscriptions. The latter are dated to June 263 AD and March 265 AD. They present *Julia Aurelia Amta daughter of Bolhazai Moqaimu*. *Inv*.VIII: 59, dated to *Nisan* 415 (= April 104), has five brothers—Bolha, Moqaimu, Hairan, Lishamsh and Baalai—building a tomb. They are said to be sons of Wahbai son of Bolhazai. Therefore, they may be brothers of Oge and Taimna, father and oncle respectively of Malku, Wahbai and Belhazai. This might mean that Wahbai the Elder at least had seven sons. If so, then it is rather odd that neither Oge nor Taimna, both prominent members of the clan, is listed among them. Perhaps, then, the five brothers have to be linked differently to the 'Beni Bolhazai'. Now, *br* preceding *bwlḥzy* may be classificatory instead of descriptive. If so, then they may be sons of Wahbai (*Dunant*, no. 6). In presenting 'Moqaimu' as a name occurring in the clan, *Inv*.VIII: 59 suggests a link with *MFP*: 217, nos. 46 and 47. Finally, *Inv*.VIII: 26 mentions a certain *blḥzy br tymnʾ whby*. He may be a brother of Zabba (*Dunant*, no. 38).

[41] Dunant (1971: 27) reads *bnwhn* instead of *bnwh(y)*. Considering that Malku is the only dedicator the reading of a plural suffix must be a misconception, either of Dunant or the engraver. As the next beneficiaries are described as *ʾḥwh, his brothers*, it would only be natural that the correct reading is *bnwh*. Presumably, the "n" is a slip of the engraver's chisel or a crack in the limestone interpreted by Dunant as a character.

> Three more inscriptions, engraved on as many columns, were found in the temple of Baalshamin. Like *Dunant*, no. 15, they probably summarize monumental dedicatory inscriptions employing the formula *ʿl ḥyy* and mentioning a number of beneficiaries, as was the case in *Dunant*, no. 14. However, although they are relatively common, the names of the dedicators, cannot be related with certainty to other epigraphical sources.
>
> *Dunant*, no. 16 relates that *Astorga and Shimeon sons of Zebaida Qarqepan* offered *three columns*. The clan-designation *qrqpn* appears once more in Palmyra, in an inscription dated to June, 4 AD (Stark 1971: 49). Except for the date and some names, its information is limited, since it is badly damaged (Cantineau 1933: 191; Dunant 1971: 28, especially note 2). None of the names, however, correspond with those of *Dunant*, no. 16. A son of Shimeon by the name of Hairan, *ḥyrn br šmʿwn br zbydʾ*, may be referred to in an inscription dated to March 98 AD (Safar 1964: 14).
>
> *Dunant*, no. 17 records that *the sons of Ogailu son of Yarhibola Aspad* (or: Aspar) *have offered three columns and their deck-beam and their roof.* 'Aspad' does not occur elsewhere in Palmyra (Dunant 1971: 29). Apparently, the dedicators expected to derive greater prestige from linking their father's name with the dedication than from the linking of their own names. The latter may have featured in the monumental dedicatory inscription on the architrave. However, both 'Ogailu' and 'Yarhibola' are very common Palmyrene names. In the same sequence as here, they appear in the genealogy of a female called 'Raata', *rʿtʾ* (Stark 1971: 43), who might be a sister of the 'sons of Ogailu'.
>
> *Dunant*, no. 18 states that *Nurbel son of Zabdateh son of Nurbel has offered five columns to the god Baalshamin.* Compared to the two previous inscriptions, it is noteworthy that the divine recipient has been mentioned. Both 'Nurbel' and 'Zabdateh' are common Palmyrene names, but only here they occur in one and the same genealogy. However, the identity of the dedicator in relation to other inscriptions remains enigmatic.
>
> On palaeographic grounds, Dunant (1971: 29) dates these three inscriptions to the last quarter of the first century AD. Together with the monumental dedicatory inscriptions, they testify to an extensive (re)construction-programme of the temple of Baalshamin. This may possibly be related to a sudden, substantial influx of members of the Beni Maazin.

Dunant, no. 19 is inscribed on the drum of a column. It is undated and reports the dedication of a major structure to Baalshamin and Durahlun. It is striking that both the tribal association of the dedicators and the listing of their brothers as beneficiaries is lacking for only the dedicators and their sons are cited. Perhaps, in this case, there were no more brothers apart from the dedicators. Identifying *Hairan and Yimla sons of Taima son of Yimla, ḥyrn wyml’ bny tym’ br yml’*, and their sons more precisely, is difficult. ‘Yimla’ is found in a dated inscription for the first time in 235 AD (Stark 1971: 26), which is about a century later than *Dunant*, no. 19 (Dunant 1971: 30). Although all genealogies yielding the name ‘Yimla’ might possibly be related to the one here, ‘Yimla’ is never associated with ‘Taima’ and only once with ‘Hairan’. These names moreover are amongst the most common in Palmyra.

Two of the earliest dedications from the temple of Baalshamin were made by women. The first, *Dunant*, no. 10, is inscribed on the drum of a column that had been reused in a later wall. It relates that *Attai and Shabhai daughters of Shahra and Atta daughter of Pirdash have offered two columns to Baalshamin, the good god, for the life of themselves and the life of their sons and their brothers.* It is dated to Kanun 335 (= November 23 AD). The personal names are very rare in Palmyrene onomastics (Stark 1971). The other, *Dunant*, no. 11, is inscribed on a column also reused. It is dated to Tebet 363 (= January 52 AD) and reports that *Amtallat daughter of Baraa son of Etnatan who belongs to the Beni* (the text has feminine: *Banot*) *Mita, the wife of Taima son of Belhazai son of Zabdibel who belongs to the tribe of the Beni Maazin offered to Baalshamin, the good and rewarding god a column for the life of herself and the life of her sons and her brothers.* These personal names are familiar in Palmyra. The genealogies, however, are not. The text informs us about the association of two tribes by marriage when a member of the Beni Maazin espoused a woman belonging to the Beni Mita. The latter entertained a close relationship with Bolastor and substantially contributed to the construction of the temple of Bel. A prominent member of the Beni Mita, Hairan son of Bona son of Rabbel, was probably seriously involved in Palmyrene politics around the middle of the first century AD. The marriage of a female of this influential tribe to a member of the Beni Maazin, who at that time endeavoured to obtain a firm footing in the city, must have been of civic significance.

The most striking aspect of these two inscriptions is not that they mention women as dedicators. Indeed, Palmyrene epigraphy yields many more examples, although they all pertain to minor dedications, especially small altars designed for burning frankincense. Most strikingly, the women list, next to their sons, for apparently they all were married, their brothers as beneficiaries. As a consequence of their marriage, they and their sons belonged to another family or clan, if not another tribe (*Dunant*, no. 11), to their brothers. This is even the case if *bny* and *ʾḥy* are conceived of as 'children' and 'siblings', including males and females. Dedications of women, then, involuntarily establish social relationships between members of different families, clans or tribes. At the same time, they bear witness to the importance of the bond siblings tend to develop with each other.

The monumental texts whose object of dedication is a part of the temple of Baalshamin, indicate that the dedicators usually belonged to the Beni Maazin. It may be inferred, then, that this tribe entertained a close relationship with this deity, whether in his original appearance of Baalshamin or in his manifestation as Durahlun. The Beni Maazin were an Arab tribe. Hence the association of Baalshamin with other deities known as 'Arab' can be anticipated (Gawlikowski 1976a).

The temple of Baalshamin has yielded two more objects with a dedicatory inscription employing the formula *ʿl ḥyy*. The first (*Dunant*, no. 23) belongs to the fragment of an altar measuring 57 × 41 × 60 cm. It had been reused in an "entrecolonnement". As its dimensions are substantial, it may be assumed that originally the altar represented a major dedication. Being dated to 63 AD, it is one of the oldest finds from the temple of Baalshamin.

> *byrḥ [šn]t 374 ʿlʾ dh*
> *q[rb ḥyr]n br ʿgylw ʾytybl dy mn bny*
> *mʿzyn [l]bʿlšmyn wldwrḥlwn wlrḥm wlgdʾ dy*
> *ydyʿ[b]l [ʿ]l ḥywhy wḥyy bnwhy wʾ[ḥwhy]*
>
> *Translation:* In the month [of the] year 374 (= 63 AD). This altar has [offered Hair]an son of Ogailu Aitibel, who belongs to the Beni Maazin, to Baalshamin and to Durahlun and to Rahim and to the Gad of Yedibel [ ] for the life of himself and the life of his sons and his brothers.

The dedicator seems to be mentioned in *Dunant*, no. 34 as well. However, this inscription is badly damaged making it impossible to decide, as in *Dunant*, no. 23 whether or not the name is complete. The Beni Yedibel, the Gad or tutelary deity of which is listed among the divine recipients, apparently constituted an important clan of the Beni Maazin.[42]

The other inscription, *Dunant*, no. 25, is bilingual and was inscribed on an altar found *in situ* that was conspicuously placed right in front of the temple (Cantineau: 1936: 346f). Its dimensions are 115 × 137 × 115 cm. Without the base and the cornice, the altar measures 82 × 66 × 82 cm; considerable dimensions in comparison with the small incense-burners dedicated to the 'Anonymous God'.

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[42] Cf. *Dunant*, no. 44.

> [Διὶ ὑψίστῳ καὶ ἐπη]κόῳ Μάλιχος κ[αὶ 'Αουειδος]
> [καὶ 'Ιαριβώλης καὶ] ῎Αγεγος οἱ Βωλλεμμέου[ς τοῦ 'Αουειδαιου]
> [τοῦ Βωλεμμέου]ς εὐχὴν ἀνέθηκαν ἔτους σκυʹ [μηνὸς]
> Περειτίου ζʹ
>
> *[l]mrʾ ʿlmʾ qrbw ʿwydw wmlkw wyrḥbwlʾ [wḥggw]*
> *[bny] bwlmʾ br ʿwydw br bwlmʾ ʾdb ʿl ḥyyhwn wḥ[yy]*
> *[bny]hwn wlyqr bny šʿdʾ šbbyhwn byrḥ šb[ṭ ywm 7]*
> *[šnt] 426*
>
> *Translation: Greek*: Malichos and Awaidos and Yariboles and Agegos (sons) of Bolemmes (son) of Awaidos (son) of Bolemmes have erected (this) as a votive-offering to the Highest and Answering Zeus. On the 7th of Peritios of the year 426 (= 7th of February 115 AD).[43]
>
> *Palmyrene*: Awaidu and Malku and Yarhibola and Hagegu sons of Bolemma son of Awaidu son of Bolemma Adab have offered (this) to the Lord of Eternity for the life of themselves and the life of their sons, and in honour of the sons of Shaada, their partners (or: co-residents). On the 7th day of the month Shebeth of the year 426 (= 7th February 115 AD).

The tenor of the text suggests that the altar is the object of dedication. The Greek differs conspicuously from the Palmyrene text not only in the sequence of the dedicators; a fact of minor interest here. More importantly, the Greek text fails to mention the clan-indication 'Adab' and omits to give the formulae *ʿl ḥyy* and *lyqr* as as well the beneficiaries. The formulae seem to have been reduced to εὐχὴν ἀνέθηκαν. Εὐχὴν qualifies the act of dedication and at the same time refers to the object of dedication. Usually (κατ') εὐχὴν qualifies a votive-offering as the accomplishment of a vow (Versnel 1981b: 45), but here and elsewhere in a Semitic context, this is improbable for the Aramaic formula *for the life of* either aims at the future favour of the deity or constitutes a paralysed moment in the continuous relationship between dedicator and deity. If the former applies, then accompanying formulae as (κατ') εὐχήν are used in the improper prospective sense. In the latter case (κατ') εὐχήν indeed may define the votive gift as the accomplishment of a vow, but simultaneously the dedicator expects his dedication to create a (new) debt on the part of the deity.[44] Albeit improbable, theoretically another possibility for the interpretation of (κατ') εὐχήν in this context is that the formula *for the life/wellbeing of* should not at all be linked with it; the former describes a public act of the dedicator, whilst the latter refers to some 'personal business' between the dedicator and the deity that is involved.

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[43] Although Greek ἐπήκοος is more appropriately translated as *Listening* or *Hearing* (Versnel 1981b: 28ff and 34ff), it should be noted that in Palmyrene epigraphy it equals Aramaic *ʿnyh*, which definitely should be rendered as *who has answered him* (Payne Smith 1903: 419).

The divine recipient is described as *Lord of Eternity* and *the Highest and Answering Zeus* here. Yet, the dedication was found in the temple of Baalshamin. Dunant (1971: 39) points out that dedications to both Baalshamin and the Lord of Eternity are often dated to the month February. Gawlikowski (1990b: 2632ff) observes that generally a close relationship between Baalshamin and divine manifestations like the Lord of Eternity exists.[45] The latter usually are dated relatively recently and by their transcendent terminology emphasize the personal bond between deity and individual worshipper. As a consequence, Gawlikowski associates them with a change in the perception and function of religion where the original tribal nature has given way to one laying more emphasis on the individual (Gawlikowski 1990b: 2634).

The altar was dedicated by four brothers, a fact which may explain why the number of beneficiaries is restricted to the dedicators themselves and their sons. If kinship terminology is foremost descriptive, no other brothers may have been mentioned because there were none. Furthermore, in Palmyra the formula *ʿl ḥyy* belonged to dedications in order to reinforce primary social relationships. Only close relatives benefit from the blessings expected from the deity as was the tribal character of religion. When distant relatives or others are meant the formula *lyqr*, with its lesser religious connotations, is employed.

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[44] Cf. Versnel (1981b: 56ff).

[45] To the observation of Dunant may be added that dedications to Baalshamin's associates, Malakbel and Aglibol, who are often addressed as a pair (Gawlikowski 1990b: 2625ff), likewise seem to have been preferably executed in the month Shebeth or February. Cf. CIS II: 3902 and 3980; *Inv.*XI: 12, 33, and 79; Cantineau (1938: 80); *PNO*, no. 16. February was definitely considered to be the best time for dedicating to divinities related to Baalshamin.

Milik's interpretation of *šbbyhwn* (l.3) as describing a *symbiose sociale et religieuse* (DFD: 60) should be rejected, for this term may simply refer to two tribal groups co-residing (Cantineau 1936: 347).[46] In that case, *bny šʿdʾ* designates a clan. Furthermore, Milik's (DFD: 60) interpretation that *bny šʿrʾ* denotes a college charged with certain well-defined tasks in the organization of religious festivals may be also doubted. If, as Milik claims, the 'sons of Bolemma' lived in a social and religious symbiosis with such officials, it may be assumed that they belonged to their guild. However, the text does not confirm this association. Indeed, it may be asked why officials should live together at all. The conception of *bny šʿdʾ* is closely linked with the interpretation of *šbbhwn* and *vice versa*.

Dunant (1971: 39) prefers to conceive of *šbb* as relatives, "proches", a definition which had already been offered as an alternative for *neighbour* by Cantineau (1936: 347). It is very unusual for tribal society, to describe relatives, close or distant, in such abstract terms. Had uncles of mother's side been meant, then they would have been described as 'brothers of their mother'. Had cousins been referred to, then they would have been described as 'sons of their uncles' or 'sons of their father's (or: mother's) brother(s)'. Assuming with Dunant (1971: 39), that *bny šʿdʾ* describes a number of individuals having the same father, and assuming that *šbb* expresses actual or intended proximity, then it might describe a patron-client bond. In that case, the 'sons of Bolemma' honour the 'sons of Shaada', because the latter consented to act as their patrons. Also, it is possible that they present the 'sons of Shaada' after having agreed to act as patrons for them so that the dedication serves as the ratification of an arrangement. Both families are unknown in Palmyra (Dunant 1971: 39; Stark 1971), making it hard to distinguish who acts as a patron of whom. *šbb* may also indicate proximity, referring to some kind of joint enterprise. In either of these last two suggestions, the most appropriate translation for *šbbhwn* seems to be *their partners*.

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[46] *šbb* means *neighbour* in Syriac (Payne Smith 1903: 555).

Altars of considerable dimensions as objects of dedications

A medium-sized altar originates from Temple of the Standards in Diocletian's Camp. Three separate pieces of the inscribed part were reused in a later wall (*RSP*: 143). One of the sides of the altar has a damaged relief that may represent the dedicator's family (Gawlikowski 1970a: 313).

byrḥ ʾlwl šnt 426 knwnʾ dnh qrb gdrṣw br
yrḥy br gdrṣw brʿty ʿl ḥywhy wḥyy bnwhy wʾḥwh
lmrt bytʾ mṣbʾ dy nṣb mtny br qynw brʿty rbʾ ʾbʾ [dy ʾb]
ʾbwhy dy gdrṣw dnh wlʾlhyʾ klhn dy ytbyn lwth dy
[mrt bytʾ]ʾd/rb bkl ʾtr klh lʿlmʾ

Translation: In the month Elul of the year 426 (= September 115 AD) Gaddarsu son of Yarhai son of Gaddarsu Baratai has offered this altar for the life of himself and the life of his sons and his brothers to the Lady of the Temple, the idol that has been erected by Mattanai son of Qainu Baratai the Great, the father (of the father) of his father, of this Gaddarsu, and to all the deities who live near her, [the Lady of the Temple] wherever, in eternity.

In his translation in both *RSP* and *Syria* 47 (1970a: 314), Gawlikowski suggests a father-son relationship between *gdrṣw* and *brʿty* (l.2) as well as between *qynw* and *brʿty* (l.3) by inserting "(fils de)". In his reconstruction of the dedicator's genealogy, Mattanai appears as the son of Gaddarsu's grandfather's brother or Gaddarsu's great-uncle (Gawlikowski 1970a: 314). However, leaving out the word *br* in a genealogical sequence very often coincides with the omission of a number of generations so that the last name acts as a clan-indication. In addition, *mtny br qynw brʿty* features as a conspicuous part of the very long genealogy, comprising seven generations, of Wahballat in *Dunant*, no. 60 inscribed on a slab of stone in a *hypogeum*-wall in the temple of Baalshamin. This inscription is dated to May 11 AD, *ʾyr šnt 322*. Since *mtny* appears as the fourth generation in this genealogy, he must have lived in the first half of the first century BC. More than 150 years later the father of this Mattanai, Qainu Baratai, was known as 'the Great' and hailed as a 'founding-father' or 'forefather' of a certain Gaddarsu in *RSP*: 143. The concepts *rbʾ* (l.3) and *ʾbʾ ʾbwhy* (ll.3–4), then, do not refer to Baratai (l.3), but to Qainu Baratai. As the genealogical link between Mattanai, the son of the renowned ancestor, and the dedicator, Gaddarsu, is in the distant past, Qainu is described as *the father of his father* (or: *fathers*?).

> This should be understood as the acknowledgement and reinforcement of Qainu's greatness by Gaddarsu and his immediate ancestors.[47] One of the exploits of a son of this forefather, Mattanai, was the erection of an idol of the *Lady of the Temple*, who appears to be identical with the goddess Allat (Gawlikowski 1973: 97; Drijvers 1976: 32). This would indicate, then, that she was already worshipped in Palmyra in the middle of the first century BC. Moreover, as *mtny br qynw brʿty* is attested both in relation to Baalshamin (*Dunant*, no. 60) and Allat, the presumed link between these deities and consequently between their worshippers is reinforced (Gawlikowski 1976a).[48]

Although the dedicator undoubtedly belonged to a very important Palmyrene clan, it is hard to identify him more precisely, especially since his genealogy is composed of an unusual combination of names. Notwithstanding his illustrious background, the tribe he belonged to remains unmentioned. The personal name 'Qainu' is very rare in Palmyra. In *Dunant*, no. 37 it appears at the end of a genealogy in an inscription which is engraved on a console found in the temple of Baalshamin that is dated to February 32 AD, *šbṭ šnt 343*. As it serves as a clan-indication without the preceding *br*, 'Qainu' may well be the same person as in *RSP*, no. 143 and *Dunant*, no. 60 which all place him in the first half or middle of the first century BC. The dedicators who put up a statue *in honour of Zabdilah son of Barikai son of Nurbel Qainu who belongs to the Beni Maazin* are the Beni Maazin (*Dunant*, no. 37). Therefore, the dedicator, Gaddarsu (*RSP*, no. 143), may have belonged to this tribe as do the beneficiaries of his dedication, his sons and his brothers.

Another altar of reasonable large dimensions was found in a cave on the brink of the watersource Efqa. Hassani and Starcky (1957: 101) interpret it as an enlarged version of the small altars designed for burning frankincense that were dedicated to the 'Anonymous God'.[49] It is inscribed on two sides with the shorter text appearing on the front. Hassani and Starcky (1957: 111) reproduce

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[47] Cf. Degen (1967) for the grammatical difficulties surrounding the interpretation of this inscription.

[48] The close relationship between Baalshamin and Allat may be substantiated by the following observation. In the Palmyrene part of CIS II: 3912, Baalshamin's epithet is *Lord of Eternity*, *mrʾ ʿlmʾ*, whereas the Greek part of this bilingual inscription describes the divine recipient as Διὶ Μεγίστῳ Κεραυνίῳ, *the Greatest Zeus of Lightning*, a very appropriate epithet for a vegetation- or weathergod. Κεραυνῷ occurs next to ʼΑθηνᾷ on a relief found in Emesa that probably originates from Palmyra. The Greek text, *IGLS*: 2220, mentions furthermore the members of the triad of Bel (Gawlikowski 1990b: 2608ff), their names being inscribed on the bottom of the edge of the relief. The names of the former are inscribed directly below two of the three represented deities. The third deity is not identified epigraphically. Since the goddess Athena is one the equations of Allat in Palmyra, this Emesene relief appears to represent Allat and Baalshamin complemented by a third unknown divinity.

[b]ʾrbnwtʾ ʿynʾ dy bwlḥʾ br ḥyrn br on the left side
ʿtʿqb ḥwml dy ʾḥd yrḥybwl ʾlhʾ
bnʾ bnynʾ dnh dy ʿyn wqtlʾ dy qd[m]
tbnʾ wktlʾ dy bryʾ wʿbd ktlʾ dy
[l]bnʾ byrḥ nysn šnt 516
wdkyr t[y]mʿʾ br [ ] tymʿ blyd[ʿ]
[w]ḥyrn b[r] mqym[w mlk]w dy ʾḥd lh
bwlḥʾ dnh rb ʿyn[ ]

wʿbd bwlḥʾ dnh ʿltʾ dh mn kysh ʿl on the front
ḥywhy wḥyy bnwhy wʾḥwhy [ ]
[   ]

Translation: During his supervision of the Source, Bolha son of Hairan son of Etaqab Hawmal, who was chosen by Yarhibol, the god, built this construction of the Source: the wall that is before the *tnb* and the exterior wall. Also he made the stone-wall. In the month Nisan of the year 516 (= April 205 AD). And may be remembered Taimaa son of [ ] Taima Belyada and Hairan son of Moqaimu Malku who were chosen by this Bolha, supervisor of the Source [ ].

And this Bolha has made this altar at his own expense for the life of himself and the life of his sons and his brothers [ ].

The first part of this text has many technical details.[50] Whilst the editors consider Hairan (l.7) as the subject of *ʾḥd* (l.7), it is possible that Bolha (1.8) chose both Taimaa and Hairan as assistants to supervise the Source for which reason they deserve to be remembered. The god Yarhibol chose Bolha as supervisor of the Source and in turn, Bolha appointed his assistants. Real limitations on the interpretation of the inscription are imposed by its deterioration following the usual listing of beneficiaries: the dedicator, his sons and his brothers. Did the text continue to list beneficiaries or, perhaps the divine recipient? Hassani and Starcky (1957: 112) believe the 'Anonymous God' to be the divine recipient. Quite a number of similar, albeit smaller, altars dedicated to this deity were found in the immediate vicinity.

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[49] Hassani and Starcky (1957: 101 and 102 = *RSP*, no. 125 and no. 126) present two more of such altars found in the neighbourhood of the watersource Efqa. In neither of the bilingual inscriptions does the formula *ʿl ḥyy* occur and they both seem to have been dedicated by the same person in 163 AD. Both relate that *Bolai son of Zebaida son of Hairan son of Moqaimu Matta has been chosen as supervisor of the Source Efqa by Yarhibol the god.* The Greek text of the inscriptions describes the object of dedication as τὸν βωμόν, *the altar*, whilst the Palmyrene text identifies it as *good remembrance*, *dkrn ṭb*. The Greek refers to its visible function, whereas the Palmyrene refers to its connotative function. Since beneficiaries are not explicitly mentioned, the dedicator is credited for the act of dedicating, whether it is of divine or fellow-human origin. The divine recipient is described as *the Lord of Eternity*, *mrʾ ʿlmʾ*, an epithet exclusively used with Baalshamin and the 'Anonymous God'.

[50] Cf. for their interpretation: Hassani and Starcky (1957: 113f).

The dedicator must have been a man of considerable means to be able to finance or co-finance considerable building-activities around the Source as well as paying for the expenses of erecting the altar. The name *Bolha son of Hairan* appears on a tessera (RTP, no. 33) that describes him as *president of the thiasos* which according to Hassani and Starcky (1957: 112) was that of Bel. It is uncertain, however, whether this Bolha son of Hairan and the individual referred to in the inscription are one and the same (Hassani and Starcky 1957: 112, note 2). If not, it would be plausible that the former is an ancestor of the dedicator. Certainly, he belonged to a renowned Palmyrene family. Yet, 'Hawmal' both as a personal name and as a clan-indication is very rare in Palmyrene epigraphy. It appears in Safar (1964: 13 and 16): *zbyd' br ḥwml* as a personal name; as a clan-indication in CIS II: 4122 (= *Inv*.VII: 6a) and CIS II: 4236 where the latter inscription identifying an image as that of *Yarhai son of Malku son of Yarhai Hawmal*, is dated to Adar 480 (= March 169 AD).[51] Both names in the genealogy are very common in Palmyra. The former inscription is the bilingual foundation-text of a tomb reporting that *Malku son of Moqaimu son of Bolbarak Hawmal has built* it in 391 (= 79 AD). *ḥwml* in the Palmyrene version corresponds with φυλῆς Κλαυδιάδος in the Greek. However, excepting 'Hawmal' there is no indication that these persons are related to each other more definitely.

Finally, a number of inscriptions attached to or referring to major dedications were found in Diocletian's Camp. The objects bearing them were all reused in the walls of a later structure. A large square socle that probably supported an altar of considerable dimensions has the following bilingual text (Cantineau 1930: 11; Gawlikowski 1973: 92).

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[51] *Inv*.VII: 6b yields exactly the same text excepting the date, which is Adar 496 (= March 185 AD). As the description of the place of provenance largely corresponds with that of CIS II: 4236, the same inscription appears to be involved. If this is not the case, then *Inv*.VII: 6b also presents *ḥwml* as a clan-indication.

> [Διὶ ὑ]ψίστῳ καὶ ἐπηκόῳ Μανναίος Ἀμμαθου
> [τοῦ Ἀδδ]ουδανου τοῦ Φιρμωνος ὑπὲρ σωτη
> [ρίας αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶ]ν τέκνων μηνὶ Περειτίῳ
> [ ]
> *lbʿlšmn rbʾ w[r]ḥmnʾ ʿl[t]ʾ dh wsmkʾ ʿbd*
> *[mʿny br] ʿmt br ḥdw[dn pr]mw[n] ʿl ḥywhy wḥyy*
> *bnwhy byrḥ šbṭ šnt 4[ ]*
>
> *Translation: Greek*: To the Highest and Answering Zeus. Mannaios Ammathos son of Haddudan son of Firmon for the well-being of himself and of his children. In the month Pereitios [. . .]. *Palmyrene*: For Baalshamin, the Great and Merciful has made Maanai son of Amat son of Haddudan Firmon this altar and the hall of banquets for the life of himself and the life of his sons. In the month Shebeth of the year 4[. .] (= February ? AD).

The clan-designation 'Firmon' indicates that the dedicator belonged to one of Palmyra's most ancient and distinguished families.

> In a bilingual inscription, CIS II: 3914 (= *Inv.*IX: 25), the city-council honours two cousins of this family, *Yarhibola son of Oge and Awaida son of Haddudan sons of Yarhibola son of Haddudan son of Zabdibol son of Haddudan Firmon*, for their contributions to the building of the temple of Bel. It was found in the southern porch of this temple and it is dated to March 175 AD, *ʾdr šnt 486*. The genealogies comprise six generations plus the designation 'Firmon'. Generally, long genealogies suggest and may claim a certain distinction. In this case, the origins of the family can be traced back well into the first century AD.
>
> A sister of Awaida is also honoured in a Greek inscription found in the vicinity of Bel's temple and dated to August 182 AD by *those of the tribe of the* Χωνειτῶν (Ingholt 1936: 109). She is identified as Θομαλλαχις Ἀδδουδανου τοῦ Ἰαριβωλεου[ς] τοῦ Θιρμωνος. She *showed herself generous* in spending 2500 *denarii for the building of the baths of the gods Aglibol and Malakbel*. Also, she may have supported the service of the temple of Bel by providing it with a *freed slave, br ḥry*. He appears to have had to guard a form of ritual purity, for he is described as, *the purified of the chamber, br dkʾ dy twnʾ* (Gawlikowski 1973: 79). He is identified as *Haddudan the freedman of Bat Firmon*

> (= the daughter of Firmon). Considering her important role in civic life, Thomallachis may have been just known as *Bat Firmon.*
>
> A brother of Awaida, *Haddudan son of Haddudan Firmon*, honours the famous Ulpius Marcus Yarhai with a statue in *Siwan* 470 (= June 159 AD), since he *helped him when he was in Charax Spasinou* (Cantineau 1938: 75). Apparently, Awaida's family was engaged in long-distance trade, which explains its extraordinary wealth. The remnant of the date of the above inscription suggests that it was dedicated around the same time. Therefore, *Maanai son of Amat son of Haddudan* may be a nephew of Thomallachis, Awaida and Haddudan. Then Amat would be their brother. It is also possible that Maanai is the grandson of *Haddudan son of Haddudan* (Cantineau 1938: 75). Then Amat would be a nephew of Thomallachis and Awaida.[52]

The members of the Firmon-clan appear to have entertained relations with three different religious centres. CIS II: 3914 links it with the temple of Bel; Thomallachis makes her contribution to the baths of Aglibol and Malakbel; and Maanai is said to have made *an altar and a hall of banquets* for Baalshamin. The tribe of the Χωνειτῶν, alias the Χομαρηνοί, alias the Beni Kumra entertained a close relationship with Aglibol and Malakbel (Gawlikowski 1973: 28; Teixidor 1980a: 282), whose sanctuary was known as the Holy Garden, ἱερὸν ἄλσος or *gntʾ ʾlym*. According to *Dunant*, no. 45, this was one of the municipal centres after the administrative reorganization in the first century AD. The temples of Baalshamin, Arsu and Atargatis were the others. Considering the close relationship of the Beni Maazin with the temple of Baalshamin and that of the Beni Kumra with the Holy Garden, it has been suggested that these tribes lent their name to two of the four quarters. The Firmon-clan entertained relations with both Baalshamin (Cantineau 1930: 11) and with Aglibol and Malakbel (Ingholt 1936: 109), therefore presumably belonging either to the Beni Maazin or the Beni Kumra. Decisive arguments for either of these options still need to be found. The fact that Thomallachis is honoured by *those of the tribe of the* Χωνειτῶν does not confirm that she was a member of it. Similarly, Maanai's dedication to Baalshamin does not necessarily mean that he was a member of the Beni Maazin. Maanai's act, as well as that of Thomallachis, may well have ensued from Baalshamin's relationship with Aglibol and Malakbel. The dedicators, then, may have belonged to a clan or tribe different from those traditionally linked with these deities.[53]

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[52] Milik (DFD: 35) believes that *Haddudan son of Haddudan* (Cantineau 1938: 75) is the brother of *Yarhibola son of Haddudan* (CIS II: 3914). Consequently, Amat (Cantineau 1930: 11) must be a brother of both Haddudan and Yarhibola and his son Maanai a nephew of them.

The efforts of the Firmon-clan for the benefit of the temple of Bel are explained by its status as a civic centre involving all the different tribes. The size of the contribution (CIS II: 3914) is intended more to impress in order to enhance the clan's status than to express the intensity of its relationship with Bel. The association of Aglibol and Malakbel with Baalshamin in a triad has caused Gawlikowski (1973: 51) to surmise that upon their arrival in Palmyra, the Beni Maazin sought to legitimize their presence by associating two of the city's ancestral deities with their own tribal god.[54] If this is the case, then they entered into some sort of relationship with the prime worshippers of the former, viz. the Beni Kumra. The contributions of the Firmon-clan to the accommodations of both Baalshamin and Aglibol and Malakbel become as a consequence less enigmatic.

> Another medium-sized altar found in Diocletian's Camp, had been dedicated by a woman (CIS II: 3988 = *Inv.*VI: 3) who made it for *Baalshamin, the Great and Merciful for the life of herself and her sons and her brothers.*[55] Like other dedications to Baalshamin, it is dated to the month February. However, the year is missing. The last name, *ʿrgn*, in the dedicator's genealogy is very rare in Palmyra. Her husband, however, belongs to a well-known family.[56]
>
> CIS II: 3989 (= *Inv.*VI: 9) is inscribed on a large altar. It is dedicated to the *Lord of Eternity, the Good and Merciful* and dated to February 235 AD. The beneficiaries are the dedicator himself, his sons and his

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[53] An important issue in need of elucidation is the status of *thiasoi*, the drinking- and dinner-societies that gathered under the patronage of a particular deity. If religion is primarily a tribal matter where a particular deity is closely related to a particular clan, what then is the social relationship between the members of a *thiasos*? Do they all belong to the same tribal group? Or, is the membership of such a cult-association established by entirely different principles of organization? The latter is suggested by CIS II: 3980 inscribed on an altar found about 400 m east of the temple of Bel and dated to 34 AD. It says that *the members of the thiasos, bny mrzḥ, have made the altar for Aglibol and Malakbel.* Subsequently, the names of the members are listed. Yet it is conspicuous that none of them seem to be genealogically related, although each is identified by his father's name as well as a clan-designation.

[54] Recently, Gawlikowski (1990b: 2630) has pointed to the artificiality of Baalshamin's triad. His triad is moreover less well established than sometimes asserted, for Baalshamin is simultaneously associated with other deities apart from Aglibol and Malakbel. This flexibility may express the relations of the Beni Maazin with as many other tribal groups.

[55] Cf. above for the social implications of women dedicating objects *for the life* of brothers.

[56] Cf. above for the name 'Aabai'.

brothers. The last name of the dedicator's genealogy, *rʾwmʾ*, is also very rare in Palmyra (Stark 1971: 49). Conspicuously, instead of *has offered*, *qrb*, or *has made for*, *ʿbd l*, it is said that the dedicator *is grateful*, *mwdʾ*, an expression abundantly present in dedicatory inscriptions where the 'Anonymous God' is a divine recipient.

CIS II: 3998 (= *Inv.*VI: 5 = *RSP*, no. 130) consists of two parts. They are inscribed on the same side of a large altar found in Diocletian's Camp. Both inscriptions are slightly damaged on the right-hand side. The first, dated to October 132 AD, is bilingual. The Greek part says that the altar is dedicated to the *Highest and Answering Zeus*. The Palmyrene equates him here with the 'Anonymous God', *bryk šmh lʿlmʾ*. The beneficiaries, in Greek as well as in Palmyrene, are the dedicator himself, his children (*Palmyrene*: sons) and his brothers, whilst his genealogy consists of very common Palmyrene names: *Zabdibol son of Yarhibila son of Lishamshi son of Hairan*. In Palmyrene the dedication is described as a *remembrance*, *dkrn*, *before* the divine recipient. The second part of the inscription is more mutilated. It appears to deal with matters of a liturgical nature, but its precise sense escapes interpretation (*RSP:* 130).

Two more large altars were found that had been reused in the Temple of Standards: *RSP*, nos. 139 and 140. Both are badly deteriorated; *RSP*, no. 140 seems to have been dedicated to the 'Anonymous God'; the divine recipient of *RSP*, no. 139 is unknown. Their dates seem to correspond with that of CIS II: 3998.

CIS II: 4003 refers to another major dedication. It is a bilingual text inscribed on a slab of stone found in the neighbourhood of the mill near the source Efqa. The indeterminate shape of the stone makes it difficult to determine the kind of object to which it was attached. It is dated to February 173 AD. In Greek the divine recipient is described as the *Highest and Answering Zeus*, presumably meaning Baalshamin. The Palmyrene part is badly damaged. The beneficiaries seem to be the dedicator himself and his brothers. The dedicator describes himself as *loving his father*, φιλοπάτορος.[57] However, he does not include his father among the beneficiaries.

Major dedications from the Palmyrena

All the inscriptions with the formula *ʿl ḥyy*, or a Greek equivalent, discussed so far, were attached to or refer to major dedications found in the city proper. The Palmyrena, especially the area north-west of the city, however, has also yielded a number of examples. Basically, they are very similar to the ones from the city proper, although they show some remarkable differences in their details.

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[57] Rendered in Palmyrene as *ʾpyn*? The genitive of the inscription is maintained here instead of rendering the nominative φιλοπάτωρ.

Compared with the objects of dedication from the city, the Palmyrena yields many cult-reliefs. In addition, the divine recipients are often specified as local deities, *ʾlhʾ rbʾ dy nzly* (CIS II: 3911), or are seldom attested in the city, for example Abgal (*PNO*, no. 6). Moreover, they are frequently qualified as *genius*, *gnyʾ* or *gd*, instead of *god*, *ʾlhʾ*. Over and above the latter, the former emphasizes a close relationship between deity and worshippers. Often, a *genius* is not known by a proper name, but is specified in relation to a spot, a city or a particular group of people (Hoftijzer 1968: 59f). A god known by a proper name may, of course, exercise such a function as well. However, if he is thus qualified, the phrase derives its meaning from the ways in which *genii* are described. This phenomenon of presenting divinities exclusively as tutelaries of a particular group of people reinforces the conception of religion as being primarily tribal. Sometimes a *genius* is qualified as *the good and rewarding god*, *gnyʾ ʾlhʾ ṭbʾ wškrʾ* (*PNO*, no. 43) suggesting that the difference in perception between a *god* and a *genius* is very minimal. Generally, *genius* is more frequently employed in a rural setting, whereas *god* features more in a civic or urban context.

*Inv.*XII: 55 (= DFD: 23), a three-lined inscription, is engraved on the plinth of a relief found in Wadi Arabah at about 50 km north-east of Palmyra. It originally represented eight deities with their attributes but one of them has weathered away. The inscription is damaged at the right-hand side. The restoration at the beginning of l.2 is suggested by the relief, whilst those at the beginning of ll.1 and 3 are plausible.

> *[ṣlmʾ dnh dy ʿ]bd šwyrʾ br tymʾ wmlʾ br [ ]mlky lbl wlbʿšmn*[58]
> *[wlʿglbwl wlml]kbl wlʾštrt wlnmsys wlʾrṣw wlʾbgl ʾlhyʾ ṭbyʾ*
> *[wskryʾ ʿl ḥyyh]wn wḥyy bnyhwn byrḥ knwn šnt 464 šlm*
>
> *Translation:* This is the relief that Shewira son of Taima and Male son of [ ]malki have made for Bel and for Baalshamin and for Aglibol and for Malakbel and for Astarte and for Nemesis

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[58] Milik (DFD: 23) is convinced that instead of *šwyrʾ*, *swyrʾ* should be read. However, the reading is of minor importance for his interpretation. He also restores *[br]mlky*.

> and for Arsu and for Abgal, the good and rewarding gods for the life of themselves and the life of their sons. In the month Kanun of the year 464 (= November 152). Peace!

The number of deities addressed by the inscription and depicted on the relief is noteworthy. Did the dedicators entertain a relationship with each of them? Or, did they intend to commit each deity's worshippers to them? The relief may express the authorative presence in this area of the city of Palmyra since the scene is dominated by a number of its prime divinities.

The dedicators are not otherwise known. Relatives of Shewira, however, appear in Safar (1964: 18, no. 8) found in the desert south-west of Palmyra and dated to March 98 AD, *ʾdr šnt 409*. As well as two other persons, it mentions *Taimarsu and Hagegu sons of Taima Shewira* (DFD: 24). In addition, *Inv*.X: 44 found in the vicinity of the agora in the city proper, reports that on the instigation of the city-council, the Four Tribes honour a certain *Ogailu son of Maqqai son of Ogailu Shewira* with four statues in January 199 AD, because he substantially contributed to the protection of caravans by equipping and commanding several military expeditions against nomadic groups. The Greek version augments the genealogy of the person honoured by one generation: ʼΟγηλον Μακκαίου τοῦ ʼΟγηλου τοῦ ʼΑγεγου τοῦ Σεουιρα. Although these inscriptions are separated by almost a century, *Ogailu son of Maqqai son of Ogailu* may be a descendant of *Hagegu son of Taima Shewira*, perhaps a great-grandson. Interestingly, one of the three reports on the Shewira-clan explicitly mentions one of its members involved in policing the desert (*Inv*.X: 44). Safar (1964: 18, no. 8) suggests a similar activity for another two approximately a century earlier. *Inv*.XII: 55 introduces another member who, like that in Safar (1964: 18, no. 8), displays some activity in the Palmyrena, albeit some fifty years later. These references suggest that the Shewira-clan was particularly skilled in military matters, possibly being a tribal group that made its living as mercenaries.

The dedicators and their sons are the beneficiaries. Yet, the genealogies, or what is left of them, do not suggest that the dedicators were directly related to each other. At most they are cousins. The use of the suffix *-hwn* with *sons*, which promotes the idea of unity, suggests that they benefitted from the joint dedication of their fathers. They may have been grouped together for brevity's sake. Or, the suffix may imply that, like their fathers, the sons constituted an intended or actual corporate body. If this is the case, then the function of joint dedications of two or more males, who are not directly related to each other, is similar to dedications made by women. A link between two different tribal groups is established. By contrast, beneficiaries of dedications made by more than one male directly related to each other generally belong to one tribal group, providing that they are associated with the dedicators in terms of kinship.

In Khirbet Semrin, about 100 km north-west of Palmyra, a temple was found that was dedicated to Abgal and Maan, *the good and rewarding gods*, *ʾlhyʾ ṭbyʾ wškryʾ*. The copy of the foundation-inscription engraved on the lintel of the entrance is lost, as a result of which Ingholt and Starcky only present the translation (Schlumberger 1951: 147). It states that the construction of the temple was financed by *Oge son of Hanaina son of Ogailu Asdai for the life of himself and the life of his father* (or: *brother*(*s*)). It is dated to August 195 AD. The inscription (*PNO*, no. 8) is almost entirely reiterated on a relief (*PNO*, no. 7a) representing, among other things, the temple. This relief had been placed in a niche inside the temple. The inscription presents the dedicator as the sole beneficiary. This is very unusual and suggests that the text is incomplete. Usually, the dedicator’s brother(s) and/or son(s) may also be expected to benefit from this kind of dedications. However, if the reading of Ingholt and Starcky of *PNO*, no. 8 is correct, then the dedicator’s father is another beneficiary, which is also relatively unusual. It may be significant that two busts are incorporated into the relief and from the accompanying inscriptions they are identified as *Qurain* (*son of*) *Oge* (*PNO*, no. 7b) and *Maqqai* (*son of*) *Hanaina* (*PNO*, no. 7c). They would appear to be respectively the son and the brother of the dedicator (*PNO*, no. 7a) and they may have been the beneficiaries next to the dedicator. Hence, the busts and their accompanying texts replace the phrase *and for the life of his son and his brother*, *wʿl ḥyy brh wʾḥwh*. Members of Oge’s family or clan are mentioned also in *PNO*, no. 2 which was found in the same sanctuary.

PNO, no. 6 is inscribed on the plinth of another relief from the temple of Abgal in Khirbet Semrin. It is dated to October 154 AD, *tšry šnt 466*. Part of the relief pictures Abgal and Ashar, each being epigraphically identified and described as a *good genius*, *gnyʾ ṭbʾ*. The other part represents the dedicator standing next to an altar for burning frankincense (Schlumberger 1951: 56). Above the dedicator’s head and on the base of the altar an inscription reads *smt ʿty*, interpreted by Ingholt and Starcky as *Attai has erected*. This would mean that

Atty is a female (Schlumberger 1951: 176). However, the dedicator mentioned in the text engraved on the plinth is a male called *Maqqai son of Azizu*. The dedicator of the relief and the dedicator pictured in it, then, are not identical. It might be suggested that the latter is the former's wife. Furthermore, no divine recipient is explicitly mentioned. Are we to understand that Abgal and Ashar, who apparently act as such in the relief, are the tacit recipients? Or, is it only Abgal, to whom the temple is dedicated? The dedication is described as a *good remembrance*, *dkrn ṭb*, this emphasis suggesting that Maqqai has striven to propitiate the divine recipient(s), whoever he/they may be. It is of course unusual, for a monumental dedicatory text to present the dedicator himself as the sole beneficiary. However, if his wife is pictured as offering to Abgal and Ashar, then she may participate in the divine blessings expected to result from the dedication of the relief.

Khirbet Faruane is situated about 20 km north-west from Khirbet Semrin. In the vicinity of a temple there, two dedicatory inscriptions employing the formula *ʿl ḥyy* were found. One is engraved on a slab of limestone (*PNO*, no. 43); another on the plinth of a relief (*PNO*, no. 39). The first reports the making of a *qbtʾ for Ginya the good and rewarding god*. According to Ingholt and Starcky *qbtʾ*, although originally meaning *tent for sheltering the divine image*, refers to a building (Schlumberger 1951: 158). The temporary dwelling-place of the deity has been replaced by a permanent one, but the word describing it has remained the same.[59] If this has, indeed happened, a major object of dedication is concerned. The beneficiaries are the dedicator himself and his sons. The names in the dedicator's genealogy, *Nabuzabd son of Saadai son of Moqaimu Hairan*, are common in Palyrene onomastics, however the sequence of names does not feature elsewhere.

The relief pictures seven deities plus a dedicator, the latter appearing at the left of the representation in smaller proportions (Schlumberger 1951: 67). It is dated to November 191 AD, *knwn šnt 503*. The divine recipients are described as *the genii of the village of Beth Phasiel, the good and rewarding gods* and probably feature on the relief. The beneficiaries are the dedicator himself, *Taima son of Zaakia* who may also be represented on the relief, and *his brothers*. Taima son of Zakaia is not known otherwise.

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[59] Payne Smith (1903: 483) renders *qʾbwtʾ* or *qbwtʾ* or *qybwtʾ* as *the ark* (of the covenant); *a chest*, *coffer*, *coffin*; *a wooden cage* for wild beasts; *qbʾ* is rendered as *an enclosure*; *an iron cage* (Payne Smith 1903: 487). These definitions reinforce the interpretation of Ingholt and Starcky.

About 15 km south-west of Khirbet Faruane, Khirbet Abu Duhur is situated. In a temple another relief picturing two dedicators and three deities was found. The dedicatory inscription is engraved on the plinth. It is dated to February 262 AD, *šbt šnt 573*. The relief is properly indicated as *glptʾ*. Yet, it is enigmatic that the text only mentions one divine recipient: *Malka, the good and rewarding god*, with the act of dedicating having been executed *in honour of* him. Only rarely has this formula a divine beneficiary. The dedicators, *Anim and Baalai* are probably incorporated into the relief, yet neither of them is accompanied by a genealogy. The personal name 'Anim' does not occur elsewhere, but 'Baalai' is more common. This pair are also the sole beneficiaries (*PNO*, no. 57).

Qaryatain, formerly Nazala, is situated at about 120 km south-west of Palmyra along the caravan-track to Damascus. A base of a column was found there with the following Palmyrene inscription (CIS II: 3911).

> *b[š]nt 457*
> *byrḥ qnyn ʿmwdʾ*
> *dnʾ wtṭlylʾ dlʿl*
> *mnh ʿbdw zbdbwl*
> *wʿtnwr wmlkw wʿmrw*
> *wydyʿbl bny bršmš*
> *br zbdbwl tdmryʾ [dy]*
> *bnzly lʾlhʾ rbʾ*
> *dnzly ʿl ḥyyhn wḥ[yy]*
> *bnyhn wḥyy blḥy*
> *brt ʿmrw ʾmhn*
>
> *Translation:* In the year 457. In the month Qanun (= November 145 AD) Zabdibol and Ettenur and Malku and Imru and Yedibel, sons of Barshamash son of Zabdibol, the Palmyrenes who (live) in Nazala, have made this column and the roof that is on top of it for the Great God of Nazala for the life of themselves and the life of their sons and the life of Belhai, daughter of Imru, their mother.

Why do five Palmyrene brothers, who happen to live in Nazala, participate in the construction of the temple to the township's prime deity?

Obviously, the motivation was to integrate themselves and to settle in the community. Nevertheless, they still describe themselves as *Palmyrenes*. Since they and their sons act as chief beneficiaries, in answering the dedication, the blessings of the *Great God of Nazala* guarantee their longed for social integration. Certainly, five brothers and their sons, together with their wives and daughters, clients and slaves, constitutes a whole clan, which had moved from Palmyra, presumably to try their fortune elsewhere. The citation of the mother of the dedicators as a beneficiary is most unusual in Palmyrene epigraphy, where major dedications are concerned.[60]

In the temple of the *Great God of Nazala*, a Greek inscription was also found. *IGLS*: 2697, dated to April 157 AD, reports the dedication of another column to this deity by two sons of a certain Moschos, i.e. Ablaios and Iaraios. Another son of Moschos by the name of Zenobios held the office of high-priest for a while (DFD: 89f). The dedicators of *IGLS*: 2697 may have entertained a close relationship with the *Great God of Nazala* and apart from themselves, their children act as beneficaries, ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας αὐτῶν καὶ τέκνων.

Two Greek inscriptions, both employing the formula ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας, originate from Emesa. They are respectively attached to a relief (*IGLS*: 2220) and an altar for burning frankincense with busts of deities on three sides (*IGLS*: 2223). The divine recipients of the former are Bel, Yarhibol Aglibol and Semeia.[61] The dedicator is unknown, but the beneficiaries are, once again, the dedicator and his children. Of the other inscription only the end remains, with the consequence that neither dedicator(s) nor divine recipient(s) are known. The beneficiaries are Kallistos—who may be the dedicator as well—his wife and his children.

Major dedications outside of the Palmyrena

A Palmyrene inscription was found in the vicinity of Tripoli in Lebanon. Engraved on a slab of limestone measuring 40 × 40 cm, its exact provenance is unknown. Aggoula (1977b: 119f) claims that it originates from the north-western parts of the Palmyrena. The first line is inscribed on the upper rim of the slab; the last two on the lower. The information of the first line does not seem to be intrinsically related to the rest of the text.

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[60] A small town called Qatna situated in the neighbourhood of Emesa, about 80 km north-west of Nazala, yielded a base of a statue with a Greek inscription stating that it was dedicated ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας τοῦ πατρός (*IGLS*: 2502). If a cult-statue of a deity is meant, then this may imply a major dedication.

[61] 'Semeia' probably is not a separate deity, but the designation for a 'divine standard' as in Hatra. Cf. Chapter 4.

> *dkyr blg br mʿyr*
> *byrḥ ʾyr šnt 493*
> *ḥgbʾ wmṣbʾ*[62]
> *ʿbd whblt br zbydʾ whb*
> *lt qmylʾ ltšʿytʾ*
> *wrḥmnytʾ ʿl ḥywh wḥyʾ*
> *ʾḥwh wbnwh wdkyr qdm ʾln*
> *ʾnš ʾnš kd šwʾ mn tnn*
> *lšlmyt mynyn mšṭ[rtʾ]*
> *ʾrbʿʾ*
>
> *Translation:* May Bolga son of Mayir be remembered. In the month Ayyir of the year 493 (= Mai 182 AD) Wahballat son of Zebaida Wahballat Qemaila has made the sanctuary and the idol for the Renowned and the Merciful for the life of himself and the life of his brothers and his sons. And may be remembered before these whoever assents here to the four written agreements of the tribes.

The last lines of this text are enigmatic, yet it accords well with the Palmyrene context.[63] Statues are sometimes erected in quadruplicate in Palmyra. Most of the names in the dedicator's genealogy are very common in Palmyrene onomastics. However, their sequence is not found elsewhere (Stark 1971: 15f). 'Qemaila', the clan-indication, is rare.[64] The beneficiaries are the dedicator himself, his brothers and his sons. In terms of the religio-historical perspective, it is interesting that the divine recipients are abstract concepts, viz. the 'Renowned' and the 'Merciful', and therefore female. Aggoula (1977b: 119) considers them to be personified divine virtues. Apart from this meritorious suggestion, it might be pointed out that in Palmyra both the 'Anonymous God' and Baalshamin are bestowed with similar epithets, which are also used to identify them. Therefore, it may be possible that the references to the Divine employed in the inscription above cloak one or two female deities.

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[62] Cf. Gawlikowski (1982: 302) for the interpretation of *ḥgbʾ* as *sanctuary* instead of *oratory*, as is proposed by the editor.

[63] Observed by the editor, although he does not identify which noun, whether it is *mynyn* or *mšṭrtʾ* (1.9), that is referred to by *ʾrbʿʾ* (1.10).

[64] Perhaps, 'Qemala', *qmlʾ* (*PNO*, no. 14), is derived from it.

CIS II: 3902, found in Rome, illustrates that the Palmyrene practice of restricting the beneficiaries of dedications to close relatives, remains even if the dedicators happen to live far away from their hometown. The inscription is engraved on a slab of marble measuring 88 × 60 cm. A relief depicts two males standing before the entrance of a temple, next to a cypress. They may be identified as Aglibol and Malakbel, the tutelaries of the Holy Garden in Palmyra.

> Ἀγλιβώλῳ καὶ Μαλαχβήλῳ πατρῴοις θεοῖς
> Καὶ τὸ σίγνον ἀργυροῦν σὺν παντὶ κόζμῳ ἀνέθηκε
> Τ. Αὐρ. Ἡλιόδωρος Ἀντιόχου Ἁδριανὸς Παλμυρηνὸς ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων ὑπὲρ
> σωτηρίας αὐτοῦ καὶ τ(ῆς) συμβίου καὶ τ(ῶν) τέκνων ἔτους ζμφ´ μηνὸς Περιτίου
>
> *lʿglbwl wmlkbl wsmytʾ dy kspʾ wtṣbyth ʿbd mn kysh yrḥy br ḥlypy br yrḥy br lšmš šʿdw ʿl ḥywhy wḥyʾ bnwhy byrḥ šbṭ šnt 547*
>
> *Translation: Greek*: To Aglibol and Malakbel, the ancestral gods. And the silver standard and all its ornamentation has offered T. Aur. Heliodoros Antiochos Hadrianos, the Palmyrene, at his own expense for the well-being of himself and of his wife and of his children. In the month Peritios of the year 547 (= February 236 AD).
>
> *Palmyrene*: For Aglibol and Malakbel. And the silver standard and its ornementation has made at his own expense Yarhai son of Holaifi son of Yarhai son of Lishamsh Shaadou for the life of himself and the life of his sons. In the month Shebeth of the year 547 (= February 236 AD).

The initial καί (1.2) and the *copulativum* preceding *smytʾ* may be explained either as Semitic linguistic influence or as the understating of the object(s) of dedication. If the latter applies, then the dedicator assumes that the reader of the text considers the relief to be part of the dedication. The silver standard has to be mentioned separately, since it is not depicted in the relief. The Greek name of the dedicator is not merely a transcription of its Palmyrene counterpart. It appears that his Palmyrene origin was more important for his identity in the context of the Capital of the Roman Empire than was his real name. Simultaneously, the names in the Greek part betray a certain relationship to the Imperial House. The extensive Palmyrene genealogy must have provided sufficient information to identify him adequately for a fellow-townsman. It is conspicuous that the reference to the dedicator's wife as a beneficiary in the Greek part of the text, is absent in the Palmyrene part.

Minor dedications[65]

Large numbers of *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions are attached to small altars designed for burning frankincense where the 'Anonymous God', alias *He whose name is blessed forever*, *bryk šmh lʿlmʾ*, explicitly acts as a divine recipient. Occasionally, the epithets, *the Merciful*, *rḥmnʾ*, and *the Compassionate*, *tyrʾ*, which are reserved for specifying the 'Anonymous God' and, very rarely, Baalshamin, have been used. In some Greek inscriptions the divine recipient is described as *the Highest and Answering Zeus*, Διὶ ὑψίστῳ καὶ ἐπηκόῳ, a phrase that likewise is applied to only these two deities.[66] In a small number of these inscriptions the dedication is motivated with the phrase *because he called upon Him and He has answered him*, *dy qr lh wʿnyh*, or part of it, especially *because He has answered him*, *dy ʿnyh*. The full expression equals εὐξάμενος καὶ ἐπακουσθείς found once in a Greek inscription employing ὑπὲρ ὑγείας, which is dedicated to Διὶ ἐπηκόῳ and dated to 546 Seleucid Era (235 AD).[67] It unquestionably qualifies the dedication as the reaction of the dedicator to the deity's response to his initial request. Therefore, it is an authentic ex-voto. It is significant, however, that the phrase features more abundantly in inscriptions without the formula *ʿl ḥyy*.[68] Concomitant is the absence of beneficiaries with the result that the personal relationship between dedicator and deity is highlighted. Simultaneously, it is suggested that the dedications represent the last phase in a bargain between dedicator and deity, being genuine votive-offerings. By contrast, the *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions may be considered as the first phase of such a bargain: a formal request to the deity for the bestowal of 'life' to the beneficiaries including the dedicator himself. Those that include the phrase *because he called upon Him and He has answered him* can be explained by assuming that the dedication is the last phase of a bargain, where the dedicator seizes the opportunity for initiating another one.[69]

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[65] For a good understanding of what follows it may be useful to consult Appendix F.

[66] In Dura-Europos the phrase is applied to *Zeus Tourmasgada* (*TEAD* IX, 3, no. 974). The full title of this deity is: *Zeus Helios Mithras*, (*the*) *Holy*, (*the*) *Highest*, (*the*) *Answering Tourmasgada*, Διὶ Ἡλίῳ Μίθρᾳ ἁγίῳ ὑψίστῳ ἐπηκόῳ Τουρμασγάδῃ; in *TEAD* IX, 3, no. 973 this is abbreviated to: θεῷ ἐπηκόῳ Τουρμασγάδῃ. A small altar from Laodicea ad Mare (*IGLS*: 1262) is inscribed with: *Karpeina, having made a vow and having been answered, offered (this) to the answering gods*, Θε(ε)ς ἐπηκόοις Καρπεῖνα εὐξαμένη κὲ ἐπακουσθῖσα ἀνέθηκε.

[67] Reproduced by Seyrig (1939: 317).

[68] Cf. for instance *Inv*.XI: 1. This inscription appears to specify the date *the Merciful*

The representation of a worshipper caught in the act of praying, stretching his open hands towards heaven, sometimes symbolically condensed to just open hands, occasionally is depicted on objects of dedication to the 'Anonymous God'.[70] The iconography demonstrates the phrase *because he called upon Him and He has answered him*, *dy qr lh wʿnyh*. Some dedications to the 'Anonymous God' are specified as *good remembrance*, *dkrn ṭb*, where the dedicator aims to propitiate the deity in advance so that he willingly answers the request.

The verbal phrase denoting the act of dedication frequently is *ʿbd wmwdʾ*, which may be rendered either as *he has made in order to express gratitude* or as *he has made in order to do honour to*.[71] The two translations have differing connotations. The former usually denotes

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actually answered the request, if Aggoula's (1979: 109) interpretation is to be followed. ll.5–8 read: *dy qrw lrḥmnʾ wʿnnwn ʿnlhwn byrḥ nysn šnt 546*, interpreted by Aggoula as *because they called upon the Merciful and He has answered them. He answered them in the month Nissan of the year* 546 (= 235 AD). Subsequently, Aggoula suggests that the date at the end of an inscription should often be interpreted as indicating the moment that the deity answered the initial request of the dedicator, as for example in *Inv*.XI: 16. Here the last three lines read: *dy qr lh wʿnyh šnt 527 byrḥ ʾb* rendered by Aggoula (1979: 112) as "parce qu'il l'a invoqué et qu'il l'a exaucé l'an 527 au mois d'aout". However, since the date usually appears either at the beginning or at the end of an inscription regardless of whether or not a votive-offering is concerned, Aggoula's interpretation may be subject to query.

[69] Hassani and Starcky's (1953: 155) comment that the phrase *because he has called upon Him and He has answered him* modifies the participle *in order to do honour* (*to Him*), *mwdʾ*, is not plausible.

[70] Versnel (1991: 70, esp. note 44) observes that the depiction of two raised hands is almost exclusively restricted to requests for revenge addressed to a deity. The Palmyrene epigraphical context suggests that the hands refer to the act of praying (Hassani and Starcky 1953: 156f). It may be noted that Versnel's examples belong to a funerary context which is absent here.

[71] *mwdʾ* is a *participium masculinum singularis Aphel* of the verb *ydy*: *to express gratitude, to do honour to, to bear testimony* (DISO: 104). The *copulativum* "w" should be conceived of as *waw-explicativum*. The participle, then, is almost causal to the verb.

a reaction to a benefit bestowed, whereas the latter may not have an immediate cause. *In order to express gratitude* suggests that the dedication is the accomplishment of a vow. Versnel (1981b: 47ff) has pointed out that, at least after a benefit bestowed, *to do honour to* a deity equals *to express gratitude* and *vice versa*. The question here is whether *mwd'* refers to a benefit previously bestowed by the deity. It may describe the relationship between dedicator and deity as habitually reciprocal without an immediate cause being present. Consequently, the participle *mwd'* does not substantiate the view of Hassani and Starcky (1953: 146f) that these *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions refer to as many accomplishments of vows. However, bilingual texts describe the dedication sometimes as εὐχήν, which usually qualifies a votive-offering as the accomplishment of a vow, especially in the accusative (Versnel 1981b: 45). In CIS II: 4090 and 4091, both short texts that present only the dedicator and the divine recipient, *mwd'* is used next to εὐχήν. In this capacity, they qualify the dedications as redeeming vows. In CIS II: 3994, the Greek text designates the object of dedication as εὐχήν, but a corresponding concept is lacking in Palmyrene. The argument is not decisive, though, for a sharp distinction should be made between texts with the formula *ʿl ḥyy* and those without.

> The multitude of dedications to the 'Anonymous God' yields only three inscriptions presenting an explicit motive. Unfortunately, all of them display major mutilations at crucial points and only one employs the formula *ʿl ḥyy*: CIS II: 4058. Milik (DFD: 181f) restores the heavily mutilated second part of this text, ll.5–8, that appears to provide a motive for the act of dedicating. If his suggestion is adopted, then the beneficiary, the daughter of the dedicator, was afflicted with paralysis. She had lost the capacity of moving her hand and foot as well as the power of speech. Milik suggests that on the occasion of the healing of these disabilities, her father dedicated an altar to the 'Anonymous God', because he was perceived to have effected the miracle. Such a sequence of events does not alter the usual interpretation of *ʿl ḥyy*. The process of healing precedes the dedication and is not its aim, so that there is no decisive argument for assuming that the accomplishment of a vow is concerned here.
>
> The formula *ʿl ḥyy* does not feature in the other two inscriptions. Ingholt (1936: 99) has reproduced one, which is commented upon by Milik (DFD: 182f). In Greek, the expression εὐχήν seems to designate that the dedication redeems a vow. The Palmyrene is badly deteriorated, but Milik produces a reading that is translated as "Parce qu'elle le suppliait (lorsqu'elle était) dans l'obscurité [années et il] lui [a répondu].

> Et encore il l'exaucera [chaque fois qu'elle l'invoquera, car elle ne cesse de] lui [rendre] grâces et d'[être diligente] à le fréquenter [ ] depuis l'enfance jusqu'à la vieillesse". Although it is elongated, the meaning does not essentially differ from the standard phrase *because he called upon Him and He has answered him, dy qr lh wʿnyh.* As a consequence, its contribution to discovering the motives of the dedicators is limited.
>
> The last inscription that may present an immediate cause is *Inv.*XI: 11. Ll.7–8 are reproduced as *dy q[rh w]ʿynh wʾdnʾh* and translated as "parce qu'il [l'a invoqué et] qu'il l'a exaucé et s'est approché de lui". The editors consider *[w]ʿynh* as a scribal error. Aggoula (1979: 110f), however, advances the plausible reading *dy [bsm l]h ʿynh wʾdnʾh,* which he renders as "parce qu'il lui a guéri son oeil et son oreille". If the restoration is correct, then *Inv.*XI: 11 is the only inscription found so far that motivates the act of dedication. However, the suggestion that the hands and ears pictured on several objects dedicated to the 'Anonymous God' refer to the succesful curing of these organs, should be rejected.

Although it is not engraved on an altar designed for burning frankincense, characteristic of the cult of the 'Anonymous God', but on a slab, the following inscription found in Diocletian's Camp is representative of *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions addressing the 'Anonymous God' as a divine recipient, *RSP*: 135.

bryk šmh lʿlmʾ ṭbʾ
wrḥmnʾ ʿbd wmwdʾ
lʿlmʾ whblt br tymr
ṣw br mlkw ʿl ḥywhy wḥ
yʾ bnwhy byrḥ nysn ywm 20
šnt 547

> *Translation:* He whose name is blessed forever, the Good and the Merciful. Wahballat son of Taimarsu son of Malku has made in order to do honour in eternity for the life of himself and the life of his sons. In the month Nissan, the 20th day, of the year 547 (= 20th April 236 AD).

Dedicators of minor dedications

The majority of these inscriptions belong to the third century AD, whereas most of the major dedications as well as the *lyqr*-inscriptions belong to the first and opening decades of the second centuries AD.

In comparison with *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions referring to major dedications, those attached to minor ones generally present short genealogies of the dedicator. Sometimes three, but mostly only two generations are listed. On several occasions, only the dedicator's name is presented. Tribe- or clan-indications are usually conspicuously absent. Therefore, the task of identifying the dedicators of minor objects in their broader social context is difficult. However, that they were in a position to bear the costs of a dedication, if only a minor one, clearly places them in the city's traditional élite or the *nouveaux riches*. Moreover, a number of inscriptions mention *(all) the members of the dedicator's 'house'*, *bny byth (klh)*, as beneficiaries. Only a member of the élite could afford to maintain an entire household consisting of close relatives: wives, children and their wives, sometimes brothers, and their wives and their children as well as parents. Slaves and occasionally clients and those related to them were also at times included. Such a *pater familias* surely equalled a genuine patron.

The *nouveaux riches* mainly consisted of freed slaves—*br ḥry* or *brt ḥry* depending on whether a male or female is concerned—.[72] Educated and high-status slaves were frequently allowed to acquire possessions that remained at their disposal. Their increasing influence based on economic success and concomitant lavishness manifested itself throughout the Roman Empire during the second and third centuries AD. A number of Palmyrene inscriptions explicitly present freed slaves as dedicating agents (CIS II: 3996, 4000, 4001, 4013; *Inv.*XI: 5 and 42).

Compared with *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions associated with major dedications, the relatively large number of women acting as dedicating agents (CIS II: 4006, 4014, 4020, 4027, 4042, 4067, 4080, 4083 and 4087; *Inv.*XI: 5, 23 and 24; Hassani and Starcky 1957: 97; Ingholt 1936: 99) or co-dedicating agents (CIS II: 4081; al-Asad and Teixidor 1985c: 6) is remarkable. Palmyra became increasingly influenced by Roman standards which gave women considerable leeway to act independently (Van Bremen 1983). Their participation may have been moreover encouraged by the private nature of the cult of the 'Anonymous God' (Gawlikowski 1990b: 2632).

The dedicator of CIS II: 4000, dated to 143 AD, is *Abnergal the freed slave of Taima son of Anan*, *ʿbnrgl br ḥry tymʾ br ʿnn*. More than a century later, in 274 AD, part of a tomb is ceded to a certain *Abgar son of Taima son of Anan* (Ingholt 1935: 107). Since the custom of naming one's son after one's father was widespread so that names genealogically alternate, it is possible that Abgar is a descendant of Abnergal's former master. Also, a son of Abnergal may act as the dedicator of another altar to the 'Anonymous God' in an inscription dated to 224 AD (Hassani and Starcky 1953: 152). The gap in time of 81 years, however, is almost more than a lifetime.

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[72] *Inv.*XI: 13 represents another example, if Aggoula's (1979: 111) interpretation of the word *ṭlyʾ* as a qualification of the dedicator as *servant*, *slave* is correct.

On similar grounds, the dedicator of CIS II: 4008, dated to 191 AD, *Wahba son of Malku Male*, *whbʾ br mlkw mlʾ*, may be a son of the master of the dedicator of CIS II: 4013, dated to 205 AD, *Hermes Basam the freed slave of Malku son of Wahba*, *hrms bsm br ḥry mlkw br whbʾ*. The husband of the dedicator of CIS II: 4014, dated to 207 AD, *Makkai daughter of Oge, the wife of Male son of Malku*, *mky brt ʿgʾ ʾtt mlʾ br mlkw*, may be his brother. If so, then Male (CIS II: 4014) belongs to the beneficiaries of CIS II: 4008. Similarly, a son of the dedicator of an inscription dated to 175 AD (Starcky 1949a: 52), by the name of *Yarhai son of Halapta son of Yarhai son of Halapta*, *yrḥy br ḥlptʾ br yrḥy br ḥlptʾ*, called Hatrai, *ḥṭry*, may feature in CIS II: 4484, an undated funerary text. CIS II: 4483, likewise undated and of the funerary genre, mentions a daughter of Hatrai called Shulla, *šlʾ*, as well as his wife who is not indicated by name. If so, then Hatrai is a beneficiary of his father's dedication.

The dedicator of *Dunant*, no. 27, dated to 207 AD, *Qorainu son of Male Qorainu*, *qrynw b[r m]lʾ qrynw*, may be the father of the dedicator of an inscription dated to 256 AD, viz. *Lishamsh son of Qorainu son of Male*, *lšmš br qrynw br mlʾ*, (Hassani and Starcky 1957: 96). If so, then Lishamsh is a beneficiary of *Dunant*, no. 27.

Children of the dedicator of *Inv.*XI: 16, dated to 216 AD, *Bona Oge Gabinus*, *bwnʾ ʿgʾ gbyns*, may feature in the funerary texts CIS II: 4475 (*Oge son of Bona*, *ʿgʾ br bwnʾ*) and CIS II: 4479 (*Yarhai son of Bona*, *yrḥy br bwnʾ*; *Mainat daughter of Bona*, *mʿynt brt bwnʾ*).

Taimarsu son of Barikai, *tymrṣw br bryky*, the dedicator of Hassani and Starcky (1953: 152), dated to 219 AD, may be the same person as the one mentioned in CIS II: 4534, again an undated funerary text.

Considering the genealogical alternation of personal names he may moreover be a distant relative of *Yarhai son of Barikai son of Taimarsu*, *yrḥy br bryky br tymrṣw*, who more than a century earlier founded a tomb in 108 AD (Cantineau 1938: 153ff). CIS II: 4018, dated to 219 AD, is dedicated by a certain *Maqqai and his brothers*, *sons of Yarhai son of Zebaida Ulpai*, *mqy wʾḥwh bnʾ yrḥy br zbydʾ ʾlpy*. In 237 AD a son of Maqqai by the illustrious name of *Julius Aurelius Hairan son of Maqqai Yarhai*, *ywlys ʾwrlys ḥyrn br mqy yrḥy*, ceded part of a tomb to someone (Ingholt 1935: 86) and another part in 238 AD (Ingholt

1935: 88). This family undoubtedly was one of the most prominent in Palmyra.[73]

In 229 AD *Taimarsu son of Wahballat son of Taimarsu*, *tymrṣw br whblt br tymrṣw*, dedicated an altar *for the life of*, among others, his brothers (CIS II: 4036). Only a few years later, in 236 AD, his father *Wahballat son of Taimarsu son of Malku*, *whblt br tymrṣw br mlkw*, dedicated a relief or some other impressive object *for the life of himself and that of his sons* (*RSP*, no. 135). Thus, Taimarsu, dedicator of the former, is a beneficiary of the latter.

CIS II: 4032, dated to 236 AD, is dedicated by *Moqaimu son of Yimla for the life of himself and the life of his brother Hairan*, *mqymw br ymlʾ ʿl ḥywh wḥyʾ [ḥ]yrn ʾḥwhy*. Interestingly, Hairan, *ḥyrn br ymlʾ mqymw*, appears as the dedicator of Hassani and Starcky (1953: 159), dated to 244 AD, where Moqaimu (CIS II: 4032) is a beneficiary. Although not listed among the beneficiaries of CIS II: 4032, Moqaimu had a son by the name of Yarhibola, *yrḥbwlʾ br mqymw ymlʾ*, who is the dedicator of another altar to the 'Anonymous God' in 240 AD (Hassani and Starcky 1953: 156). As the beneficiaries here are the dedicator and his sons and his brothers, Moqaimu (CIS II: 4032) apparently had more children.

The dedicators of *Inv*.XII: 34, dated to 239 AD, *Ogailu son of Maloka and Yarhai his brother*, *ʿgylw br mlwkʾ wyrḥy ʾḥy*, may be related to the brothers Julius Aurelius Hairan and Julius Aurelius Malochas, sons of Germanus, who together ceded part of a tomb in 241 AD (Cantineau 1938: 155). If so, then Ogailu and Yarhai are Malochas' sons. The fact that a tomb was owned by their father and uncle indicates that they belong to the municipal élite.

The dedicator of CIS II: 4061, which is undated, *Marona son of Haddudan son of Marona*, *mrwnʾ br ḥdwdn br mrwnʾ*, may have belonged to the famous family of Thomallachis that apart from entertaining good relations with the Beni Kumra, was involved in the worship of Aglibol and Malakbel. The personal name 'Haddudan' features prominently in this family's genealogies.

CIS II: 4081 is dedicated by a male, *hrms*, and a female, *ʾmtbl*, (Stark 1971: 5) *for the life of Taimarsu and Ateman and Yimla*, *tymrṣw wʾtʿmn wymlʾ*, their sons. The same may apply to CIS II: 4074 dedicated by a female, *[ʾ]mlhʾ*, and a male, *hrmz*, *for the life of her son.*[74]

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[73] If *Ulpai*, *ʾlpy* (CIS II: 4018, 1.5), is a *gentilicium*, despite the absence of a proper *nisbe*-ending, then the dedicator may be a descendant of the famous entrepreneur Marcus Ulpius Yarhai son of Hairan Abgar who more than once earned a honorific inscription in the middle of the second century AD (cf. Appendix G). It is noteworthy that Maqqai's son is also called Hairan (Ingholt 1935: 86 and 88).

[74] Often when there is more than one dedicator, the suffixes relating the beneficiaries to the dedicators are nevertheless cast in the singular mode. This phenomenon especially

CIS II: 4056 has been damaged so that its date is unfortunately illegible, as are the endings of ll.3 and 4 in which the dedicators are mentioned.

> *bryk šmh [lʿlmʾ]*
> *ṭbʾ wrḥrmn[ʾ]*
> *ʿbd ydy br h[ ]*
> *[w]lšmš br š[ ]*
> *ʾ[ḥ]wh ʿl ḥyy[hwn]*
> *wḥyy ʾmhwn*
> *wbnyhwn byrḥ*
> *ʾ[d]r šnt 5[ ]*
>
> *Translation:* He whose name is blessed forever, the Good and Merciful. Yaddai son of H[ ] and Lishamsh son of Sh[ ] his brother have made for the life of themselves and the life of their mother and their sons. In the month Adar of the year [ ].

If the reading is correct, the dedicators have a different parentage. Yet, the second dedicator is identified as a brother of the first. Apparently, they are half-brothers having the same mother but different fathers, which may explain why their mother is mentioned among the beneficiaries together with themselves and their sons.[75] She provides the medium through which the dedicators are related to each other. *Inv.*IV: 7a, relating the founding of a tomb, refers to a similar state of affairs. The founder built the tomb for his father and his mother as well as three others who genealogically differ from him. However, they are indicated as his brothers and it is said that they were born from the same mother as the founder of the tomb.

In all the inscriptions referred to so far, the 'Anonymous God' acts as a divine recipient. A bilingual text, dated to 115 AD found *in situ* along the northern portico of the 'Great Colonnade' dedicates the altar on which it is written to θεῷ ἐπηκόῳ—a Palmyrene equivalent is missing—by a centurion of the Roman army named Gaius Julius Maximus (*Inv.*XII: 33). The same officer was honoured with a statue about twenty years later (*Inv.*X: 81). The honouring agents were *Abgar son of Hairan Abgar and those who went up with him to Spasinou Charax.*

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occurs when the dedicators are also related to each other via suffixes. Cf. Hassani and Starcky (1953: 156) and *eidem* (1957: 97).

[75] Rather than assuming that the kinship-terminology employed here is classificatory.

Julius Maximus may have given protection to this caravan in his capacity as a Roman officer. The honour bestowed on him as a representative of the Roman army, then, is granted to all the legionnaires in his command. He served for more than twenty years in Palmyra, during which period he must have become a respected member of the body civic. The designation of the divine recipient applies to the deity of whom it is said elsewhere that he answers those who call upon him, *dy qr lh wʿnyh*, i.e. the 'Anonymous God'.

CIS: 3976 relates the dedication of a small altar by a member of a renowned family. The divine recipient, however, is not the 'Anonymous God'. He is described as *the Gad of the Blessed Source*, *gdʾ dy ʿynʾ bryktʾ*. The dedicator is *Bolna son of Azizu son of Azizu son of Shaila*, *bwlnʾ br ʿzyzw br ʿzyzw br šʾylʾ*. Now, the city-council erected two statues *in honour of Seleukos Oge son of Azizu Azizu Shaila*, *slwqws br ʿzyzw ʿzyzw (br) šʾylʾ*; one in 254 AD (CIS II: 3934) and another in 259 AD (CIS II: 3935). Seleukos was a high officer in the Roman cavalry. When the office of στρατηγός was incumbent on him for some time, he endowed the city-council with a large amount of money (CIS II: 3934). It would appear that Bolna is a brother of Seleukos. CIS II: 3976 states that he served two terms as the *curator of the Source*, which undoubtedly implies that he spent large amounts of money in order to shed lustre on his office (Hassani and Starcky 1957: 105). It moreover suggests that CIS II: 3976, which is undated despite its apparent completeness, should be dated to the middle of the third century AD.

In general, the social status of the dedicators in this category of *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions seems to have been different to that of the dedicators of major objects. This is implied both by the multitude of dedications and by the incidental qualifications of the dedicators. Even if they belonged to the city's élite, it is hardly conceivable that all the dedicators of minor objects occupied the position of *grand seigneur* or tribal chief, which may be proposed for the majority of the dedicators of major objects. This is reinforced by the fact that some of the dedicators are qualified as *freed slave*, *br(t) ḥry*, or *servant*, *ṭlyʾ* (*Inv*.XI: 13). Occasionally, the trade of the dedicators is given, viz. CIS II: 4069 and *Inv*.XI: 32: (*ritual*) *butcher*, *ṭbḥʾ*, and *baker*, *nḥtwmʾ*, respectively.[76] Likewise, the dedicator of *Inv*.XII: 45 is qualified as

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[76] Cf. Aggoula (1979: 113) for *Inv*.XI: 32. In CIS II: 4029 the dedicator seems to be qualified by *dbyḥtʾ*. However, DISO does not describe it as referring to a profession or

resident physician, *ʾsyʾ gwyʾ*, i.e. of the temple of Bel.[77]

The difference in social status between the dedicators of minor objects and those of major ones may be explained by both the variant nature of the dedications and, closely associated with this, the private character of the cult of the 'Anonymous God'. Concomitantly, it may indicate a general shift in the social organization in which the tribal momentum was replaced by a civic one, intimating that other qualities apart from his memberhip of a tribal group determined an individual's social status.

Beneficiaries of minor dedications

In relation to the overall numbers of minor dedications, only a small number of the dedicators can be identified, even though some of the dedicators are related to each other and sometimes act as beneficiaries for each other's dedications. Since the beneficiaries are usually related to the dedicator in terms of kinship, their identity additionally remains obscure. In order to visualize the meaning behind the dedication of small altars, the terms of kinship relating beneficiaries to dedicators should be examined. Kinship-terminology in inscriptions attached to minor objects is much more varied, compared to that employed in major dedications. As a rule, the beneficiaries of the latter are restricted to the dedicators themselves, their brothers and their sons. This threesome is still prominently present in inscriptions attached to minor dedications, but, in addition, a host of other terms of kinship is employed.[78]

> The dedicator's father is mentioned ten or eleven times (CIS II: 4030, 4036, 4044, 4045, 4050, and 4061; *Inv*.XI: 20; al-Asad and Teixidor (1985c: no. 7); Hassani and Starcky (1953: 154 and 159); CIS II: 4067—the formula *ʿl ḥyy* is absent here—). His mother is listed a couple of times (CIS II: 4018, 4024, and 4056; al-Asad and Teixidor (1985c: no. 7); *Inv*.XI: 14); as is his wife (Hassani and Starcky (1957: 98); Starcky (1949a: 52); Seyrig (1939: 317); CIS II: 4001 and 4069); and his daughters (Hassani and Starcky (1957: 98); CIS II: 4014, 4027 and 4058); as well

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the like, instead listing it as *offering*. Thus, *dbyḥtʾ* may refer to the object of dedication as a whole (DISO: 54).

[77] Cf. Aggoula (1979: 116), who proposes as an alternative for *gwyʾ*, *resident*, the meaning *eunuch*.

[78] Cf. Appendix F.

> as his sisters (CIS II: 4018). Twice his uncles are listed (Hassani and Starcky (1953: 159); CIS II: 4052); and three times his brother's sons or nephews (CIS II: 4007, 4017, 4050).[79] Occasionally, wives, as dedicators, mention their husband as a beneficiary (CIS II: 4027; *Inv*.XI: 23).

Most conspicuously, members of the dedicator's 'house' are listed as beneficiaries (CIS II: 4009, 4026, 4033, and 4036; *Inv*.XI: 6, 8, 16, 17, and 20; *RSP*, no. 134; CIS II: 3997—the formula *ʿl ḥyy* is absent here—). More than the descendants of a common ancestor—a unit determined by genealogical principles inherent in the phrase 'the house of Tudor'—*(all) the members of his house* refers to an actual social and, presumably, economic unit of people living and working together as a 'household', including slaves and clients. This can be implied since the phrase appears right after the mention of the dedicator's sons and brothers as beneficiaries.[80] Over and above the connotation of his familial or blood-relationships, the phrase describes the dedicator as a *pater familias* and a patron. Indicating the beneficiaries as *his people*, *ʾnšwhy* (al-Asad and Teixidor 1985c: no. 2), is compatible with this for its connotation is similar to that of *(all) the members of his house*.

On one occasion, the list of beneficiaries concludes, after having mentioned the dedicator himself, his father and his brothers, with *his friends*, *rḥmwhy* (CIS II: 4061). *Friend*, *rḥym*, is used by clients to qualify their relationship with their patrons in Palmyra. Since the dedicator belonged to the city's élite, *his friends* probably refers to members of his peer-group who, on occasion, act as patrons and assist him. Their social relationship, then, is determined by the principles of *hospitium*.[81] However, the concept may also denote the dedicator's clients.[82]

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[79] CIS II: 4007 is explicit in designating them as *sons of his* (viz. the dedicator) *brothers*, *bny ʾḥwhy*. In the other two the dedicating agent is but one single person. Accordingly the suffixes relating the beneficiaries to the dedicator should have been cast in the singular mode. This, indeed, applies to most of the concepts that describe the beneficiaries, except for *sons*, *bnyhwn*. The suffix, must relate to a group of people. The only group referred to in the text are the dedicator's brothers. Therefore, the suffixes must relate to them, although the dedicator's sons may be included. CIS II: 4017: *ʿl ḥywhy* (= dedicator) *wḥyʾ ʾmh wḥyʾ ʾḥwhy wḥyʾ bnyhwn*; CIS II: 4050: *ʿl ḥywhy* (= dedicator) *wḥyʾ ʾbwhy wḥyʾ ʾḥwhy wḥyʾ bnyhwn*.

[80] *Inv*.XI: 20 lists the dedicator's father and *all the members of his house*, *ʿl ḥyʾ ʾbwhy wbny byth klhwn*, as beneficiaries. If the suffix of *byth* relates to *ʾbwhy* instead of the dedicator, then a dynastic connotation may be perceived, although it is more likely that the father's household is meant.

[81] Cf. CIS II: 3973, commented upon above.

[82] Cf. Chapter 4.

> CIS II: 4035 presents a similar problem, although its reading is not unanimously accepted. After mentioning the dedicator himself and his sons as beneficiaries, the text continues in l.4 with: *wgrh dy[pyn]*.[83] The first part, *his host*, refers to a *hospitium*-relationship whilst *grh* has probably been modified in the damaged part. A personal name, beginning with *Di* or *Ri*, might be read. Another possibility is to restore *dy[ryn]*, meaning *his house* or *his family*, or *ry[š]*, meaning *his principal* (*host*) (Payne Smith: 1903: 540). Also, *grh* may mean *his guest*. In that case, the last part of the description may have revealed the guest's geographical origins which would be in line with the usual nature of the social relationships between dedicators and beneficiaries in this category of *ʿl ḥyy*-texts. As a rule, the dedicator is socially superior to the beneficiaries. By contrast, in *lyqr*-inscriptions, the honouring agent usually is socially inferior to the honoured.

The beneficiaries are on two occasions described as *his* (= the dedicator's) *master*, *mrwhy*. Once the master is the second beneficiary after the dedicator himself (CIS II: 4011); once the master's sons appear as beneficiaries (*Inv*.XI: 13).[84] Here the dedicator's status is inferior to that of the beneficiaries. Yet, considering the phenomenon of *philotimia*, it is awkward that the 'master' is not named. Similarly, it is conspicuous that his role did not demand that he and his sons be mentioned as beneficiaries before the dedicator himself.

CIS II: 4000 might also incorporate a social superior among the beneficiaries.

> *dkrn ṭb lbryk*
> *šmh lʿlmʾ*
> *ʿbd ʿbnrgl br*
> *ḥry tymʾ br ʿnn*
> *ʿl ḥywh wḥyʾ*
> *ʿnn brh byrḥ*
> *ʾb šnt*
> *454*
>
> *Translation:* A good remembrance to He whose name is blessed forever. Abnergal, the freed slave of Taima son of Anan, has

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[83] *Inv*.XI: 15: *wgrh dy sy[ ]*.

[84] In this inscription the dedicator is described as *ṭlyʾ*, rendered by the editors of *Inv*.XI as *the younger*. Aggoula (1979: 111), however, points out that it should be "le serviteur, l'esclave". This accords with the fact that the master's sons or children act as beneficiaries of the dedication.

> made (it) for the life of himself and the life of Anan his son. In the month Ab of the year 454 (= August 143 AD).

Grammatically, the suffixes, in ll.5 and 6, may be interpreted in several ways. First of all, both of them may refer to the dedicator. In that case, the freed slave may have named his son after his former master's father to do honour to him and to express his devotion. Another possibility is that both suffixes relate to *Taima son of Anan* (l.4). Thus, the inscription represents one of the rare instances where the beneficiaries are socially superior to the dedicator. The motive probably would be similar to that in the first case. A third possibility is that the first suffix refers to the dedicator, whereas the suffix of *brh* relates to *Taima son of Anan.* Theoretically, it is even possible that the first suffix refers to *Taima son of Anan*, whereas that of *brh* refers to the dedicator. Other inscriptions reporting dedications of freed slaves pose exactly the same problem (CIS II: 3996, 4001, 4013) and none presents a decisive solution. However, since suffixes usually relate the beneficiaries to the dedicator, it is plausible that this also applies in this situation.

Women presenting major dedications adhered to the standard list of beneficiaries consisting of sons and brothers. By contrast, women presenting minor dedications do not.[85] Admittedly, the inscription reproduced by Hassani and Starcky (1957: 97) lists the dedicator and her son as beneficiaries and those of CIS II: 4087 are unknown, because it is badly damaged. The inscription cited by al-Asad and Teixidor (1985c: no. 6) mentions a female co-dedicator, but presents as beneficiaries only the dedicators themselves. In both CIS II: 4027 and *Inv.*XI: 23 a woman dedicates an object *for the life of herself and her husband* and in the latter example probably continues with *their sons*, *b[nyhwn].* CIS II: 4014 is a rare example where the dedication, which lists as beneficiaries the dedicator and her daughter, entirely refers to women.

The variety of kinship-terminology that occurs in the *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions referring to minor dedications distinguish them from their counterpart attached to major ones. Paradoxically, the familial and domestic relationships of the minor dedications restricts their scope to the sphere of daily life. By contrast, even though the beneficiaries are primarily sons and brothers, the scope of *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions referring to major dedications is tribal. It suggests the possibility that the beneficiaries do not belong to one single household, but that each one represents such a social and economic unit. Jointly, a number of units constitute a clan or even a tribe. Of course, it can be expected that minor dedications have a limited scope, since the derived honour is not spectacular. Thus minor dedications are basically restricted to the private spheres of religious life, whereas major dedications *per se* belong to the public spheres of religious life. The dedication of a temple or a main altar implies that the dedicator has gone to a great expense for the benefit of the community, inciting the latter to do honour to him. The formula *ʿl ḥyy* in the dedicatory inscription transfers part of this honour to the beneficiaries. Since a major dedication inevitably marks the dedicator as a prominent member of the élite, the beneficiaries, the dedicator's sons and brothers, obviously are also part of it, especially as the scope of the public spheres of religious life is the tribe or clan. Each of them furthermore represents a tribal subdivision. Consequently, through them the whole tribe or clan benefits from the dedication. Simultaneously, by restricting the beneficiaries, the acquired prestige is retained in the family.

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[85] Cf. Appendix F.

This state of affairs suggests that, when major dedications are concerned, kinship-terminology is to be conceived of as classificatory, although it was not perceived to be so by the dedicator. His intentions are merely descriptive. The fact that not one *ʿl ḥyy*-inscription lists the 'Beni X' as beneficiaries is illuminating in this respect.

The differences between the major and minor dedications may be substantiated by the fact that the former primarily date from the first and first half of the second centuries AD. During this period a transformation took place in the frame of reference of the Palmyrene inhabitants. Essentially, it was directed away from the tribal group to the city. The minor dedications mainly belong to the third century AD by which time this transformation was completed. Concomitantly, the household came into prominence as the social and economic unit to the detriment of the clan or tribe. As a subdivision it was more appropriate for the needs of the city as main frame of reference. It is remarkable that no major dedication from the third century AD remains.

The 'Anonymous God'

From the inscriptions, which suggest a personal relationship between him and his worshippers, the 'Anonymous God' is usually described as a deity that primarily belongs to the private spheres of religious life (Gawlikowski 1990b: 2632). Whilst a range of the dedicator's close relatives act as beneficiaries, more important is the fact that minor dedications *per se* belong to the private spheres of religious life. Phrases like *because he called upon Him and He has answered him*, *dy qr lh wʿnyh* and *in order to do honour* (*to Him*), *mwdʾ*, that are only found in dedicatory texts having the 'Anonymous God' as a divine recipient, substantiate such a conception. Moreover, in many dedicatory inscriptions mentioning the 'Anonymous God' as a divine recipient, the formula *ʿl ḥyy* is absent, so that nothing but the relationship between him and the dedicator is involved. This furthermore reinforces the view that the 'Anonymous God' answers the worshipper's personal needs. That *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions frequently cite personal names in addition to terms of kinship relating beneficiaries to dedicators (CIS II: 4000, 4001, 4006, 4027, 4032, 4039, 4058 and 4068; Starcky (1949a: 52); *Inv*.XI: 4, 10, 23 and 28), only adds to the suggestion of a personal relationship between deity and worshippers.

The cult of the 'Anonymous God' is enigmatic. Its only information derives from the innumerable minor dedications, most of which originate from the third century AD. Compared to the cult of other Palmyrene deities, that of the 'Anonymous God' is conspicuous for the personal relationship between deity and faithful. Gawlikowski (1990b: 2632f), moreover, observes a tendency to transcendence and monotheism which is substantiated by the sheer multitude of dedications. It was almost though every respected citizen wished to make known his good relations with the deity. In this sense the dedications assume the role of a kind of status-symbol, suggesting that the cult of the 'Anonymous God' was on a civic level.[86] Milik (DFD: 293) who attributes its institution to a decree of the city-council suggests that it was *in nomine*, however it apparently attracted many a citizen in its *de facto* capacity.[87] No definite evidence has been found so far to indicate that the 'Anonymous God' was in the possession of a regular sanctuary.[88] Presumably, his cult was not bound to one or more particular spots, although clusters of objects dedicated to him have been found at certain points.[89] However, the amount of dedications found scattered throughout the city outnumbers that found in clusters. Considering that practically none has been found *in situ*, the occurrence of clusters should be treated with caution. Because the size of the altars makes them perfectly suitable for transportation, incense-burners may have simply been erected at any spot deemed suitable by the dedicator. One of the rare examples found *in situ* was placed on the street beside the entrance of a residence.[90] Consequently, Teixidor's (1979: 115ff) identification of the 'Anonymous God' with Yarhibol, the oracular deity of the Source may be challenged. By contrast, the suggestion that the 'Anonymous God' represents an aspect of Baalshamin is more plausible, especially since they have much in common (Gawlikowski 1990b: 2632ff). However, the independence of the 'Anonymous God' should be emphasized (Gawlikowski 1990b: 2633).

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[86] The cult may have existed merely in the *dedication* of small altars designed for burning frankincense, although it is suggested that the principal rite was the *burning* of frankincense (Gawlikowski 1990b: 2650).

[87] Cf. Gawlikowski (1990b: 2633) for a refutation of Milik's suggestion.

[88] *Inv*.XII: 45 (1.1), largely damaged, seems to mention a *dining-hall*, *smkʾ*, dedicated to the 'Anonymous God' and *Wadda*, a deity attested in central and southern Arabia (Haussig 1965: 476 and 549). Because of the lacunae, however, it is very difficult to grasp

Comparing dedicatory and honorific inscriptions

In spite of their public display, the minor dedications to the 'Anonymous God' are not distinguished by the prestige which they may have imparted to the dedicators. The major dedications stand in stark contrast. However, their dedicatory inscriptions never use the formula *in honour of*, *lyqr*, or one of its Greek equivalents, rather they prefer the formula *for the life of*, *ʿl ḥyy*. Yet, *lyqr*-inscriptions are also

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the full meaning of this text. In a review, Teixidor (1980a: 61f) expresses his doubts about the correctness of the reading.

Ingholt (1936: 84), like *Inv*.XII: 45 inscribed on a slab and also damaged, seems to refer to a *niche* designed for sheltering a statue dedicated to the 'Anonymous God'. It is unclear, though, whether a pictorial representation of the 'Anonymous God' is in question. According to Gawlikowski *RSP*, nos. 135 and 145 refer to significant monuments, but it is uncertain whether a building or some other object is meant. Similarly, *Inv*.XII: 31 describes the object of dedication as *this stele and altar*, *nṣbtʾ dh wʿltʾ*. Aggoula (1979: 114) points out that since *nṣbtʾ* is preceding *ʿltʾ*, it has to refer to a major object, but its nature remains obscure. Therefore, he suggests to render *nṣbtʾ dh* as *this monument*.

[89] The area surrounding the Source Efqa, Diocletian's Camp and the temple of Bel. Recent excavations along the northern city-wall have yielded another cluster of incense-burners of which all appear to have been reused as construction-material (al-Asad and Teixidor 1985c).

[90] Strabo relates about the Nabataeans that *they worship the sun, building an altar on top of the house, and pouring libations on it daily and burning frankincense* (*Geography* XVI, 4: 26). Cf. also Arnaud (1985: 380ff).

abundantly present in Palmyra, and the subsequent examination may illuminate differences in the employment of the respective formulae.

Upon perusal, Appendices F and G reveal a number of striking differences between dedicatory inscriptions employing the formula *ʿl ḥyy* and honorific inscriptions employing the formula *lyqr*. Honorific inscriptions are usually attached to statue-carrying devices as consoles. By contrast, dedicatory inscriptions preferably belong to objects with cultic purposes, like altars or (parts of) temples. Without exception, the former describe the statues they refer to as representing human beings, renowned Palmyrene citizens. Often their salutary deeds are specified or alluded to by means of the stereotyped phrase *because he pleased them (in every single respect), bdyl dy špr lhwn (bkl ṣbw).* Furthermore, the erection of statues is never presented as a dedication and consequently, the inscriptions do not mention divine recipients. Nevertheless, the provenance of at least a part of the inscriptions suggests that the erection of statues is closely associated with religious activity for they either originate from the *peristylia* of the temples of Bel and Baalshamin or from the 'Great and Transversal Colonnades' and the agora. The 'Great Colonnade' served as a processional way connecting the temple of Bel with the western parts of the city which contained an important religious centre (Gawlikowski 1976b: 159). The 'Transversal Colonnade' and the agora played an important role in economic enterprises. By contrast, dedicatory inscriptions with the formula *ʿl ḥyy*, especially those referring to major dedications, originate from temple-precincts and almost never fail to cite a divine recipient.

Honorific inscriptions are also distinguished by the fact that the name of the honoured person is elaborated. His genealogy, comprising several generations, often includes a pseudonym so that there can be but little doubt, then, about his identity. In this respect he is very similar to dedicators of major dedications. Concomitantly, the honouring agents are described in rather vague terms. *Inv.*X: 107 is representative of a *lyqr*-inscription.

> [Μᾶρκον Οὔλπιον Ἰαραιον] Αἰρα[νου τ]οῦ ’Αβγαρο[υ]
> [ἡ] ἀναβᾶσα ἀπὸ Σπασινου Χαρακο[ς]
> συνοδία ᾗς ἡγήσατο ’Αβγαρος υἱὸ[ς]
> αὐτοῦ βοηθήσαντα αὐτῇ παντὶ
> τρόπῳ τειμῆς χάριν ἔτους ου´
> μηνὸς ’Αρτεμειοσίου

> *ṣlm mrqs ʾlpys yrḥy br ḥyrn*
> *ʾbgr dy ʾqymw lh šyrtʾ dy slqt*
> *mn krk ʾspsnʾ ʿm ʾbgr brh bdyl*
> *dy ʿdrh bkl ṣbw klh lyqrh*
> *byrḥ ʾyr šnt 470*
>
> *Translation: Greek*: Marcus Ulpius Yarhai son of Hairan son of Abgar. The members of the caravan that went up from Spasinou Charakos guided by Abgar, his son, for he has assisted them in every respect, for his honour. In the month Artemesios of the year 470 (= Mai 159).
>
> *Palmyrene*: The statue of Marcus Ulpius Yarhai son of Hairan Abgar, which the members of the caravan that went up from Spasinou Charakos with Abgar, his son, have erected for him, because he has assisted them in every respect, for his honour. In the month Ayyir of the year 470 (= June 159).

Frequently, the honouring agent is a group of people or a civic institution. Sometimes it even is a tribe or clan: *Beni Gaddibol* (CIS II: 3917); *all those of the Beni Zabdibol* (CIS II: 3950, 3951 and 3953); *Beni Hashash* (*Inv.*IX: 33 and 34); *Beni Agrud* (*Inv.*X: 131); in co-operation *Beni Kumra* and *Beni Mattibol* (CIS II: 3915); οἱ ἀπὸ φυλῆς Χωνειτῶν (Ingholt 1936: 109) who are identical to *Beni Kumra* (*RSP*, no. 162); *Beni Maazin* (*Dunant*, nos. 37, 39 and 43). Tribes or clans act as honouring agents in co-operation with deities: *Baalshamin and Durahlun and the Beni Maazin* (*Dunant*, nos. 40 and 41); *Aglibol and Malakbel and the Beni Kumra* (CIS II: 3969; *RSP*, no. 160); *Allat and the Beni Nurbel* (*RSP*, no. 159); *Allat and the Beni Maazin* (CIS II: 3966). The last examples suggest close relationships between tribal groups and certain deities.

Another group of inscriptions describes the honouring agent as a college of priests: *the priests of Baalshamin* (*Dunant*, no. 38); *the priests of Bel* or ἱερεῖς θεοῦ Βήλου (Seyrig 1939: 320; *Inv.*IX: 20; *Inv.*XI: 100); *the priests of Herta* (Cantineau 1938: 268), *Beni Taimarsu*, *the priests of Baaltak*, *the goddess* (Gawlikowski 1973: 33). The last one suggests that the priesthood of a particular deity is held by a group of close relatives. If *Beni Taimarsu* describes a clan, then the qualification *priests of Baaltak* implies either that the office was hereditary or that it was incumbent on a particular clan like the Levites in Ancient Israel. It may also suggest that the members of the clan were equally involved in the cultic worship of the deity.

Many honorific inscriptions present the city-council, *bwlʾ wdmws*, ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος or shortly *bwl'*, ἡ βουλή, as the honouring agent.[91] Two Greek inscriptions, neither of which employs the formula τειμῆς χάριν, even have a statue erected by *the city*, ἡ πόλις (*Inv*.III: 18; *Inv*.X: 67).[92]

Two inscriptions, dated to 25 AD (*Inv*.IX: 12) and 51 AD (CIS II: 3923), i.e. before the administrative reorganization of the sixties of the first century AD, report the erection of a statue by the *gathering of the Palmyrene people*, *gbl tdmry'*, rendered in Greek respectively as Παλμυρηνῶν ὁ δῆμος and Παλμυρηνῶν ἡ πόλις. Also, the city-council is nominated a couple of times as inciting *the four tribes* to erect statues (Ingholt 1932: 279; *Dunant*, no. 48; *Inv*.X: 44).

The members of a caravan, *bny šyrt'*, οἱ ἀναβάντες ἀπό, ἡ συνοδία, or *the* (*Palmyrene*) *merchants who dwell in*, *tgry' (tdmry') dy b*, οἱ (Παλμυρηνῶν) ἔμποροι, are also frequently cited as honouring agents. In *Dunant*, no. 51 it is the *cavalry of the force stationed at Gimla*, *pršy' b'br' dy gml'*. *Inv*.X: 79 has οἱ ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου αὐτοῦ οὐηξίλλου erecting a statue for probably an ἔπαρχος, a high officer in the Roman army.

Sometimes the honouring agent is not entirely an undifferentiated group of people but only partly. In *Inv*.X: 81 Marcus Ulpius Abgar and *the members of a caravan* honour a centurion. *Inv*.X: 87 has two clients of Abgar's brother Marcus Ulpius Yarhay and *the merchants who went up with them*, *wtgry' sy slq 'mhwn*, initiating a statue for their patron.

Next to undifferentiated groups of people, individuals erected statues as well. In this group of inscriptions the honoured are often described in covert terms as 'patrons', i.e. of the honouring agent. Frequently, the honoured is qualified as *his friend*, *rḥmwhy*, τὸν φίλον, sometimes additionally and overtly as *his patron*, *qywmh*, προστάτην. Also, he is described a couple of times as *benefactor*, εὐεργέτην (*Inv*.X: 77 and 130), and once even as *redeemer*, σωτῆρα (*Inv*.III: 23). *RSP*, no. 161 qualifies him as the honouring agent's *master*, *b'lh*.

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[91] *IGLS*: 4008, 4009, 4013, 4014, 4015 and 4016 all of which originate from Rouad suggest that this custom is not restricted to Palmyra. They are all attached to socles of statues. Five mention the city-council (ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος) as the honouring agent, whereas once (*IGLS*: 4008) ὁ δῆμος is listed. Three times the act is motivated by the phrase τειμῆς καὶ εὐνοίας χάριν, *for honour and goodwill* (IGLS: 4014, 4015 and 4016), once by τειμῆς χάριν (*IGLS*: 4013), and also once by εὐνοίας ἕνεκεν (*IGLS*: 4008). Two are dated to 118 AD.

The text on a base from Nicopolis records that ὁ δῆμος erected someone's statue τειμῆς ἕνεκεν (*IGLS*: 167). Similarly, ὁ δῆμος καὶ ἡ προβουλὴ of Seleucia, according to *IGLS*: 1185 which is inscribed on a socle, put up someone's statue ἀρετῆς καὶ εὐσεβείας καὶ τῆς πρὸς τὴν πατρίδα εὐνοίας καὶ φιλοτειμίας ἕνεκεν, *because of virtue and piety and goodwill and* philotimia *towards the fatherland.*

[92] In *Inv*.X: 67 the honoured person is Julia Maesa, sister of Julia Domna wife of Septimius Severus. Thus, it should be dated to the end of the second or beginning of the third centuries AD.

In some instances the inscriptions are so badly damaged that a reliable picture of the nature of the relationship between honoured and honouring agent can hardly be detected. A patron-client bond may nevertheless determine *Inv*.VI: 7 and *Inv*.X: 125. Similarly, it may have motivated the erection of the statue of a tax-collector by one of his agents (*Inv*.X: 113). However, their relationship may simply have been determined by a business-contract.

The qualification *patron*, τὸν πάτρωνα, applies a couple of times to a member of the leading Palmyrene family of the middle of the third century AD, viz. that of Odainath the *corrector totius orientis*. CIS II: 3944 qualifies a brother of Odainath as such (Drijvers 1977: 846ff). It reports the erection of his statue by *Aurelius Philinus son of Maryo Philinus Raai*. Odainath himself is indicated as a *patron* twice (*Dunant*, no. 52; *Inv*.XII: 37) and on both occasions the honouring agent is a συμπόσιον, a religious drinking and dining company. In addition, he is once honoured by the guild of gold- and silversmiths as τὸν δεσπότην, *the master*, and *our lord*, *mrn*, i.e. of the city of Palmyra. As *king of kings* and *corrector totius orientis*, *mlk mlkʾ wmtqnnʾ dy mdnḥʾ klh*, he is posthumously honoured by two military commanders who call him *their master*, *mrhwn* (CIS II: 3946). The same agents honour his wife Zenobia, *btzby*, in a similar inscription where they call her *their mistress*, *mrthwn* (CIS II: 3947). It is unclear whether Odainath and Zenobia are qualified as *master and mistress* in their capacity as the uncrowned royal family of Palmyra or more specifically as personal patrons of the military commanders. However, the alternatives do not mutually exclude each other.

In all of these *lyqr*-inscriptions the honouring agents lavishly motivate their act, by which they once more enhance the prestige of the honoured. Their salutary deeds are recorded and thus acquire a touch of immortality. It is possible to differentiate according to the status of the honouring agents. For example, if the latter is a college of priests, then the honoured is praised for his building-activity in the temple of a particular deity (Cantineau 1936: 268).

Two tribal groups honour someone, because he has made peace between them (CIS II: 3915). Together with their deities, the *Beni Maazin* honour someone for his contribution to the building of the temple of Baalshamin (*Dunant*, no. 40). Elsewhere, the *Beni Maazin* honour someone else for the same reason (*Dunant*, no. 43). Yet elsewhere it is told that Baalshamin and Durahlun and the *Beni Maazin* honour someone *because he has pleased both them and their gods* (*Dunant*, no. 41). *Dunant*, no. 39 is motivated similarly, although the honouring agent is restricted to the *Beni Maazin*. *RSP*, no. 159 relates that the goddess Allat and the

Beni Nurbel honour a member of the *Beni Maazin.* Again Allat, now probably assisted by the Beni Maazin—the inscription is slightly damaged at this point—, honour someone for his contribution to the building of the temple of Allat (CIS II: 3966). Aglibol and Malakbel and the *Beni Kumra* honour someone *because he has pleased their gods and themselves* (*RSP*, no. 160), and again because the honoured granted the gods of the Holy Garden a substantial gift (*RSP*, no. 162). The *Beni Kumra* honour Thomallachis for her contribution to the baths of Aglibol and Malakbel (Ingholt 1936: 109). CIS II: 3917 has the *Beni Gaddibol* honouring someone mainly for his building-activities to their benefit both in the city of Palmyra itself and in Vologesias. Conspicuously, the *Beni Zabdibol* honour someone by erecting one statue of the person in question and another two of his sons (CIS II: 3950, 3951 and 3953). CIS II: 3951 motivates the act with the standard phrase *because he has pleased them.*

Similar phrases accompany the erection of statues by the city-council. CIS II: 3927 motivates the initiative of the Βουλή with *he ordered an eternal grant as an offering* (θυσίαν) *and other offerings* (ἕτερα ἀναθέματα) *to Malakbel and the Tyche of Taimi as well as Atargatis, the ancestral gods for the benefit of the* βουλή. It is of interest to point out that the honour of this statue was bestowed after the benefactor's death, *btr dy myt.* The Greek part of the text very appropriately subscribes to this by indicating that it was erected *for honour and remembrance*, τειμῆς καὶ μνήμης χάριν. In CIS II: 3924 a substantial gift to the city-council is recorded among the reasons for erecting the statue.

Well-known phrases from the vocabulary describing the relationship between cities and their benefactors throughout Antiquity, are abundantly present in Palmyra. The benefactor's salutary deeds are said to originate from his φιλοτειμία (CIS II: 3914 and 3924; *Inv.*X: 39, 57, 69, 105, 115 and 127) or from his *loving the fatherland*, φιλόπατρις; *rḥym mdynth* (CIS II: 3914, 3930, 3931, 3932 and 3952; Cantineau (1933: 175); *Inv.*IX: 29; *Inv.*X: 59, 98 and 114); εὔνους πρὸς τήν ἰδίαν πατρίδα (Cantineau 1938: 76). Also his *sincerity*, δικαιοσύνη or ἅγνεια (*Inv.*III: 14; *Inv.*X: 55 and 109), or *(good) citizenship*, (ἀγαθὸν) πολείτην (Cantineau (1938: 76); *Inv.*III: 18; *Inv.*IX: 23; *Inv.*X: 129), or his *membership of the city-council*, σύνεδρος (*Inv.*IX: 23; *Inv.*X: 57, 59 and 69) or his *illustriousness*, ἐπίσημος (*Inv.*X: 55 and 115) is adduced for justifying the erection of his statue. Sometimes the benefactor's qualities are presented as being concomitant with his *piety*, εὐσεβής, *dḥl ʾlhyʾ* (Cantineau (1933: 175); CIS II: 3914, 3930 and 3931; *Inv.*IX: 59; *Inv.*X: 57, 63, 69, 105, 109 and 129).

Patriotism and piety were perceived to be closely bound up with each other which explains why (city-)gods often co-operate with human beings as honouring agents. Moreover, some texts presenting the city-council as the honouring agent motivate the act by reference to building-activities in temples initiated and/or financed by the honoured (CIS II: 3914, 3923, 3924 and 3959; *Inv*.IX: 11; *Inv*.X: 13). Sometimes a deity is said to have rendered testimony in favour of the honoured which presumably had a great impact on the city-council's resulting decision (CIS II: 3919, 3932 and 3952; Ingholt (1932: 279); *Inv*.X: 115). Similar testimony may originate from high (imperial) officials or institutions (CIS II: 3934 and 3942; *Inv*.X: 44, 55 and 115; *Dunant*, no. 48).

Persons who did not display their liberality towards their hometown, but towards an emporium having a large Palmyrene colony were also honoured by the Palmyrene city-council (*Inv*.X: 114). This included persons who, in one way or another, contributed to the safety and success of a caravan, ἀνακομίσαντα τὰς συνοδίας, *who led the caravan back home* (CIS II: 3936 and 3942; *Inv*.IX: 30; *Inv*.X: 44 and 127). This is very obvious when it is said that the honoured protected a caravan against nomads or, generally, that he *campaigned against them* (*Inv*.X: 44) or, that *he managed to keep the peace with them* (Ingholt 1932: 279), for they always were a possible threat to caravans. A person in this capacity may be described as a *military commander*, στρατηγός (Ingholt 1932: 279). Now and again the office is hinted at by using a derivative of the cognate verb: στρατηγήσαντα (CIS II: 3932, 3934 and 3942; *Inv*.X: 115). In Palmyrene a noun with a preposition is employed: *bʾsṭrṭgwth*, *during his office* as στρατηγός (CIS II: 3932 and 3934; *Inv*.X: 115). Once a military officer is honoured because he showed himself *pious and loving his fatherland* at any moment during his lifetime (*Inv*.X: 109). Other military commanders are honoured without further qualification (*Inv*.X: 79 and 81).

In a few instances, the office of στρατηγός is enumerated along with the *participium aorist active* ἀγορανομήσαντα, which alludes to the honoured's function as *inspector of the markets* (CIS II: 3932 and 3942; *Inv*.X: 115). It is unclear whether the *participia* στρατηγήσαντα and ἀγορανομήσαντα relate to two aspects of the same office or whether two different functions are described, each separately adding to the *cursus honorum*. In addition, persons are honoured for attending the prestigious office of γραμματεύς, *state-secretary* (CIS II: 3959; *Inv*.X: 39). In *Inv*.X: 115 it is stated that, together with the honoured, the city-council also honours his father. The latter fulfilled all the civic duties in *the municipal administrative (and religious?) apparatus*, πᾶσας λειτουργίας ἐκτελέσαντι. Another motive for the city-council was the influential status of imperial officials. CIS II: 3938 relates that it erected a statue for the *Emperor's lieutenant*, ἐπίτροπον; *dwqnrʾ dy qsr mrn*.[93]

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[93] According to CIS II: 3942 the same person held numerous offices contributing to his prestige.

Twice the person honoured, next to other salutary deeds, is said to display a generous zeal in attending to the Roman Emperor and his company when they visited the city (CIS II: 3932 and 3952).

Once the honoured is described, referring to his building-activity, as *founder*, κτίστην (*Inv*.III: 76). Once a statue is erected by the city-council in honour of an envoy of the Emperor. He is described as *redeemer and benefactor of the city*, τὸν σωτῆρα καὶ εὐεργέτην τῆς πόλεως (*Inv*.X: 34). Since the date is missing, the conditions to which these exalting appositions refer will remain enigmatic. However, like CIS II: 3927, the statue was erected *for remembrance*, μνήμης χάριν. In this instance, it refers to the salutary deeds over and above the honour that is bestowed posthumously.

Inscriptions where the *members of a caravan* act as an honouring agent motivate the bestowal of honour usually with the standard phrase *because he has pleased them*, *bdyl* (or: *mn*) *dy špr lhwn*, and with expressions like the honoured *has assisted it*, *ʿdrh* (CIS II: 3916, 3928 and 3963; *Inv*.X: 107, 111 and 124). *Dunant*, no. 45 reports the erection of four statues by *the caravan*, ἡ αὐτὴ συνοδία. Each was placed in the sanctuary of one of the 'four tribes' in honour of the famous Soados Boliados. It expounds at length about his benefactions towards this particular caravan as well as on other matters adding to his prestige. Similarly, *Inv*.X: 96 claims that the honoured *rescued and assisted* the honouring agent when the latter was *in big trouble*, [πάσῃ προ]θυμίᾳ βοηθήσαντα αὐτοῖς καὶ συνλαβόμενον. CIS II: 3948 conspicuously honours the leader of a caravan since he saved its members a large amount of money.

Inscriptions which refer to the erection of statues of patrons by clients seldom elaborate the motives. Once the standard phrase *because he has pleased him* (*Dunant*, no. 46) and once the phrase *because he has assisted him*, *bdyl dy ʿdrh* is used (Cantineau 1938: 75). Only *Inv*.V: 7 which has several lacunae at crucial points, specifies the honouring agent's motives. Following the phrase *because he has pleased him*, it is stated that *he* (the honoured patron) *has supported him* (the honouring agent) *and that he* (the honoured patron) *has offered this column so that two statues*(*?*) *may be placed on top of it*, *wʾšlṭh [wqr]b ʿmwdʾ dnh lmqwmw ʿlwhy [ṣlm]yn trn*.

The lack of additional motives in inscriptions describing or suggesting a personal patron-client bond between honouring agent and honoured, is explained by the fact that the same inscriptions usually indicate the patron's status by honorific appositions such as *his friend and patron* or *his benefactor*. As has been pointed out in Chapter 1, personal patron-client bonds are naturally diffuse, usually permanent and profoundly affecting daily life. Therefore, there is no need for the honouring agent to detail specifically his patron's salutary deeds. Qualifying So and So as a patron is sufficient.

In all *lyqr*-inscriptions which have been referred to so far, the mechanism of patronage is prominent. Irrespective of whether the relationship between honouring agent and honoured is that between a tribal group or a college of priests or the members of a caravan and a powerful man of means or, between the city-council and a municipal benefactor, usually the latter is said to have granted the former valuable commodities or important devices which leaves him indebted to the benefactor.[94] In an attempt to equilibrate the balance, benefactors are honoured with statues publicizing their salutary deeds which, in turn, contributes to the esteem of the benefactors. Inscriptions referring to a personal patron-client bond display the same result, with the exception that the salutary deeds of the benefactor are implied in his description as a patron.

Apart from the categories of *lyqr*-inscriptions that are governed by mechanisms of patronage, there is a category where the honoured and honouring agent are related to each other in terms of kinship. Some examples explicitly state that statue and concomitant honorific inscription were executed after *the honoured person died*, *btr dy myt* (CIS II: 3920 and 3954; *Inv*.X: 4 and 119). In bilingual inscriptions, this is specified in Greek by μετὰ τήν τελευτήν (CIS II: 3920) and μνήμης χάριν (*Inv*.X: 119) or μνήμης ἕνεκεν (CIS II: 3954).[95]

The act of honouring is motivated by the Aramaic *lyqr* or its Greek equivalent τειμῆς χάριν. However, since the statues were erected after the honoured person's death, they are primarily expressions of grief and consolation.[96] *Inv*.X: 53 states that the son of a deceased man erected a statue of someone *who has displayed well towards the deceased*, *bdyl dy hlk ʿmh špyr*. Either the honoured was a good friend—whatever that implied in Antiquity—or, he simply was the deceased man's patron. Bonds of patronage may have been hereditary for both patrons and clients, so that the son's act is an attempt to balance the services between his father as a client and his patron by expressing gratitude. Simultaneously, he demonstrates his willingness to continue the patron-client bond. The erection of the statue, then, is an action that almost automatically obliges the patron to his (future) client.

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[94] In *Inv*.III: 18 'the city' honours someone who is subtly described as *citizen and patron* in one breath.

[95] On one occasion, the honouring agent is the honoured's son (CIS II: 3920); once it is her husband (CIS II: 3954); once a father regrets the death of two of his sons (*Inv*.X: 4); once a daughter and sister erects a statue for both her deceased father and her bewailed brother (*Inv*.X: 119).

[96] Ingholt (1936: 96) which is attached to a relief representing two women and which explains that a brother of the women made it, presumably commemorates them as deceased, although it is not explicitly stated. Similarly, *Inv*.XI: 81 relates that someone erected statues of his father and his brothers and built the niches containing them. The end of the text names each of the honoured. According to Cantineau (1930: 36), the same honouring agent, assisted by someone who apparently was not related to him, erected statues of himself and his sons. The honouring agent may have been inspired by *philotimia*, although its mark of expression is unusual.

Inv.X: 24 explicitly reports the erection of someone's statue by his brother *because he* (the honoured) *has consecrated from his own resources his* (the honouring agent's) *son to Bel, bdyl dy qdš lh ḥdwdn brh mn kysh l[bl ʾl]h.* Irrespective of the exact meaning, the honoured appears to have acted as a patron towards his brother. Simultaneously, this inscription is a perfect and rare example of the unwritten principles governing kinship. A number of inscriptions relate the erection of a father's statue by one or more of his sons (*Inv*.IX: 7; *Inv*.X: 2 and 99; CIS II: 3922 and 3925). Once it is suggested that the father determined the erection of his statue. It is unclear, however, whether his instructions to his sons issued in his will or when he was still alive. The act is motivated by the remark that the father *has well served three terms as a horse-soldier*, undoubtedly as a high officer (*Inv*.IX: 24).

Twice a father is honoured by his sons for his building-activities. *Inv*.IX: 1 refers to the consecration of the temple of Bel and *Milik* (DFD: 162) alludes to the building of the temple of Nabu. The latter states that the father dedicated his building-activities *for the life of himself and the life of his sons*. It is as though the sons reciprocate his benefaction of making them co-beneficiaries by erecting a statue in his honour. CIS II: 3957 provides another unusual example, where irrespective of whether the verb *ḥdt* is interpreted as *he has renewed* or as *he has consecrated* (DISO: 83), a grandson honours his grandfather.

Where motives are not specified in accompanying inscriptions, sons erecting statues in honour of their fathers must have been inspired by feelings of respect and gratitude. Concomitantly, they implicitly claim to take part in the father's esteem. The two instances that motivate the bestowal of honour refer to prestigious enterprises initiated and/or financed by the fathers with which the sons associate themselves, albeit covertly. By their presentation as co-beneficiaries of their father's act, the sons already share in their father's prestige.

The four *lyqr*-inscriptions relating the erection of statues by close relatives after the death of the honoured are exceptional.[97] The locations in which they were found, the agora, the temple of Bel and the 'Transversal Colonnade', are not renowned for their funerary context. Indeed, the phrase *after he died*, *btr dy myt*, almost reads as an apology, as though the erection of the statues at this particular spot, amongst others that have been erected during the honoured's lifetime, needs to be justified.

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[97] One more example may be added, although the phrase *after he/she died* is lacking. Instead, the inscription concludes with the expression *Alas, ḥbl* (Cantineau 1931: 128).

The formula *lyqr* is also abundantly used in a funerary context, although it is usually not applied to statues, but to tombs and grave-monuments. Generally, the innumerable inscribed statues and busts originating from tombs only convey the names of the persons represented, often preceded by the indication *the image of*—*ṣlm* or *ṣlmt* depending on whether the deceased is a male or a female—and followed by the expression *Alas*, *ḥbl*, as in *RSP*, no. 101c: *The image of Tamma daughter of Hura son of Bolha. Alas*, *ṣlmt tmʾ brt ḥwrʾ br bwlḥʾ ḥbl*.

In the private tombs it is as though the presence of death ridicules any circumstances. Among the host of funerary inscriptions only one example appears to break this rule: CIS II: 4193. Once it must have been attached to a grave-monument for it relates that a number of statues representing the founder of the tomb, his wife and his son, had been erected *during his lifetime in his honour*, *bḥywhy lyqrh*. The tombs, designed for eternity, housed one's mortal remains almost as a second immortal flesh, so that they became the perfect means by which one's name would live on forever. Thus, in general, Palmyrene *lyqr*-inscriptions display a remarkable zeal for the immortalizing of names, but tombs were the sole objects one was morally allowed to erect *in honour of* oneself. Excepting one instance, where the interpretation is doubtful (Cantineau 1930: 36), no statue has been erected and no accompanying *lyqr*-inscription has been executed by the honoured person himself in Palmyra. Even the erection of statues representing the honouring agent's close relatives is extremely rare in public places and should it occur, then an unusual reason is given or may be presumed.

According to their foundation-inscriptions, the tombs, by contrast, were exclusively built for the founder himself and his offspring, sometimes specified as his male offspring (Ingholt 1935: 60 and 109; CIS II: 4159, 4176 and 4196). Admittedly, parts of tombs were ceded to

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The statue, found in the temple of Bel, is erected by the parents of the honoured *in her honour*. The remains of the Greek version of the Palmyrene text informs us that the act was executed *for honour and remembrance*, τειμῆς καὶ μνήμης χάριν.

others, sometimes non-relatives. However, this practice does not affect the rule, because it is usually presented as side-information.[98] Tombs augmented one's prestige. *Per se*, they impressed contemporaries, but the inscriptions reveal that the founder was especially mindful of his future prestige and, of course, that of the other 'beneficiaries' of the formula *lyqr*, εἴς τειμήν, usually his male offspring. Frequently, the formula is extended by the expression *in eternity*, *ʿd ʿlmʾ* or *lʿlmʾ* or *dy ʿlmʾ*. In bilingual texts, the corresponding Greek expressions are εἴς τειμήν . . . εἴς τὸ παντελές (CIS II: 4192, 4209 and 4215) and εἴς τειμήν . . . εἴς τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον (CIS II: 4201) and εἴς τὸ παράπαν (*Inv*.IV: 7b).

Whilst the *lyqr*-inscriptions which were attached to statues were found in the city's public places, most of the funerary *lyqr*-inscriptions were found outside the city-walls. Epigraphically, it is noteworthy that in bilingual texts, Aramaic *lyqr* corresponds to Greek εἴς τειμήν in a funerary context, whereas in a honorific context it corresponds to τειμῆς χάριν or τειμῆς ἕνεκεν. This semantic shift is closely linked with the differing nature of the honouring agents. The construction of tombs adds to the founder's own prestige—honoured and honouring agent partly coincide—, whereas the erection of statues does not so much add to the honouring agent's own prestige, but to that of the honoured. Moreover, compared to mere honorific inscriptions, those in a funerary context usually comprise more than one 'beneficiary'. Apart from himself, the founder has his (male) offspring participating in the 'honour'. As they are related to him in terms of kinship, the structure of the inscriptions resembles that of the dedications employing the formula *ʿl ḥyy*. However, unlike the latter, the 'beneficiaries' are restricted to (male) offspring. With few exceptions, even brothers are not included.[99] Often there was no need for this, since many tombs were founded by two or more brothers, who all alike participate in the honour conveyed by their joint enterprise. A few inscriptions, nevertheless, name the founder's father as sole or co-beneficiary. CIS II: 4160 relates that the founder *made this house of burial for himself and his sons to the honour of Phaila, his father*, *lyqr pyl' 'bwhy*, εἰς τειμὴν Φειλᾶ τοῦ πατρὸς. The same occurs in *Cantineau* (1938: 153), whilst in *Cantineau* (1933: 191) the father is also included in the honour which the monument conveys.

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[98] Funerary reliefs depict the founder amidst his close relatives. The representation aims at conveying his prosperity (Seyrig 1951: 9f), reinforcing the suggestion that the entire structure is meant to add to the founder's prestige.

[99] Gawlikowski (1970b: 189, no. 19) appears initially to supply such an exception since the 'cousins' of the founders, *bny ddhwn*, are seemingly included. However, the text accords with the rule that only offspring are included, if *bny ddhwn* is conceived of as *their grandsons*. In its entirety l.3 reads: *lyqrhwn wlyqr bnyhwn wlyqr bny ddhwn*. If *ddhwn* is composed of twice the *nota relationis* plus suffix, then *bny ddhwn* means *the sons of the latter*, i.e. the grandsons of the founders. The expression returns in ll.5–6, referring to a co-founder who is separately mentioned. Despite the fact that the suffix is in the singular mode, whereas *his sons* is plural, the meaning may be similar as in l.3. Ll.5–6 read: *wʾp ʿbd whblt br blnwry bwšʾ bt ʿlmʾ lh wlbnwhy wlyqr bny ddh*: *And also has*

CIS II: 4201 explicitly includes the father among those for whom the tomb was built. *Inv.*IV: 7a and *al-Asad and Teixidor* (1985b: 271) additionally mention the mother of the founders. Together with *Cantineau* (1933: 191), these two inscriptions are significant for the inclusion of the founder's brothers. Furthermore, the brothers explicitly share in the honour which the building of the tomb brings about. Conspicuously, these three inscriptions belong to early Palmyrene epigraphy. *Inv.*IV: 7a is dated to 378 Seleucid Era (= 67 AD), *al-Asad and Teixidor* (1985b: 271) to 397 (= 86 AD) and the palaeography of *Cantineau* (1933: 191) is archaic.

In summary, *lyqr*-inscriptions in a funerary context emphasize 'vertical' kinship. By contrast, *'l ḥyy*-inscriptions usually 'vertically' count the dedicator's sons amongst the beneficiaries and sometimes his father, but seldom include his grandsons.[100] Generally, his brothers are listed. The latter are conspicuously absent in *lyqr*-inscriptions in a funerary context. Thus, in *'l ḥyy*-inscriptions 'vertical' kinship is less emphasized, whereas the value of 'horizontal' kinship is accredited. This substantiates the impression that *'l ḥyy*-inscriptions are not so much concerned with eternity, but with life at present. The most important first order social relationships are indicated.

The emphasis of 'verticality' in *lyqr*-inscriptions in a funerary context may be associated with the care which male offspring was presumed to take for deceased male ancestors. Brichto (1973), in an elucidating article, demonstrates that family-tombs constituted a perfect opportunity for maintaining ancestor-cults.[101] This, he argues, was the constituent principle of ancient family whose main aim is to perpetu-

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made Wahballat son of Belnuri Bosha the house of eternity for himself and his sons and in honour of the latter's sons.

[100] Except for *Inv.*XII: 45.

[101] Seyrig (1951: 9f) observes that funerary reliefs depict the deceased amidst his close relatives. The scene should be interpreted as continuing family-life after death and thus, it idealizes family-life.

ate itself forever. The emphasis of 'vertical' kinship in a funerary context is logical, given that members of tribal groups were related to each other by genealogies in the male line, and that these groups were the main structuring principle in Antiquity. Analogous to the tomb, an imperishable monument, male offspring bear a man's name. If the founders of the tombs manage to ensure that they are used by male offspring as a place of burial only, each of them appears as a second Adam, as a renowned founding father of a whole tribe. Whilst once more their prestige is augmented, it is of minor importance whether the tomb is actually used according to their desire.

Although the objects dedicated with the formula *ʿl ḥyy*, especially those referring to major dedications, as well as the statues erected with the formula *lyqr* originate from one and the same preoccupation that permeated Antiquity, they each have their own context. As action and reaction, they represent two sides of the same coin. Objects dedicated with an inscription including the formula *ʿl ḥyy* add to a man's prestige. As a reaction his statue is erected with an inscription using the formula *lyqr*. Milik (DFD: 162) provides an excellent example of such a course of events. It employs the respective formulae in one and the same inscription in precisely this relationship. Frequently, though, *lyqr*-inscriptions imply it by including the building-activities of the honoured in their motivation. The establishment of public buildings and objects from which honour may be derived was dedicated to the gods. The objects ascribing honour explicitly mention the persons responsible for the construction of public buildings etc. In short: *ʿl ḥyy* is by the patron; *lyqr* is for the patron.

It is remarkable that the percentage of bilingual texts among *lyqr*-inscriptions in a honorific context is far higher than that among *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions. The latter, especially those referring to major dedications, generally are of an earlier date than the former. This trend towards bilingualism, indeed, may illustrate the waxing Roman influence in Palmyra. As in the rest of the Empire, Palmyrene citizens indulged in *euergetism* and *philotimia* (Seyrig 1941: 248; Will 1970: 270; Gawlikowski 1983a: 66).

For the victory of . . .

One Palmyrene *ʿl ḥyy*-inscription, CIS II: 3971, deserves a separate treatment, since the employment of the formula is rather unusual in comparison with the inscriptions alluded to so far. The Greek part of this bilingual text is unfortunately almost entirely missing. It is attached to a round *cippus* found at el-Kerasi, a spot west of Palmyra. The *cippus* is about 130 cm high and measures between 110 and 135 cm in circumference.

> [ ]
> [κ]α[ὶ ὑπὲρ σω]τηρίας Σεπτιμίας Ζηνοβίας τῆς
> λαμπροτάτης βασιλίσσης μητρὸς τοῦ βασιλέως [ ]
>
> *ʿl ḥ[ywh] wz[kwth dy] spṭymyws*
> *whblt ʾtndr[ws nhy]rʾ mlk mlkʾ*
> *wʾpnrṭʾ dy mdnḥʾ klh br*
> *spṭ[ymy]ws [ʾdynt mlk] mlkʾ wʿl*
> *ḥyh dy spṭymyʾ btzby nhyrtʾ*
> *mlktʾ ʾmh dy mlk mlkʾ*
> *bt ʾnṭywkws m 14*
>
> *Translation: Greek*: [ ] and for the well-being of Septimia Zenobia, the illustrious queen, mother of the king [ ].
>
> *Palmyrene*: For the life and the victory of the illustrious Septimius Wahballat Athenodorus, king of kings and *corrector totius orientis*, son of Septimius Odainath, king of kings, and for the life of Septimia Batzabai, the illustrious queen, mother of the king of kings, daughter of Antiochus. m 14[102]

Assuming that the Palmyrene part of the text is fairly complete, the absence of both a divine recipient and a dedicator is very significant. Although it is unlikely, especially as concerns the divine recipient, perhaps the tacit assumption was that they were known to the reader. Milik (DFD: 293) points out, that there are good reasons for attributing the erection of this *stele* to the city, more specifically the city-council (*bwlʾ wdmws*). If so, then the inscription intends explicitly and officially to inform a stray visitor of its loyalty to the 'house of Odainath' which acted as the 'royal' house of Palmyra during the last decades of its existence. Most remarkable, however, is the fact that the formula occurs at the beginning of the text and that it is amplified with *(ʿl) zkwth, (for) the victory of.* Together, these formulae equal Greek ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας καὶ νίκης and Latin *pro salute et victoriis.*[103] In these languages the expressions exclusively refer to the Roman Emperor.[104]

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[102] In *Inv*.III: 19 Odainath's title is rendered as *mtqnnʾ dy mdnḥʾ klh* (Drijvers 1977: 849). The Palmyrene transcription of the Greek equivalent of *mtqnnʾ*, *viz*. *ʾpnrṭʾ* (ἐπανορθωτής), is given in the inscription cited above. The designation 'm 14' (l.7) is rather perplexing.

The honorific titles earned by Odainath are automatically transferred to his son and successor Wahballat. Concomitantly, that Zenobia is Wahballat's mother seems to be an important factor in determining her status. Although the date is lost, it may be assumed that Odainath was already dead. Therefore, the inscription must have been executed during the last years of Palmyra's existence as an independent entity. In this turbulent period, the city's leading family made a pass at the Roman imperial purple (Starcky and Gawlikowski 1985: 68f). Since the formula *for the life and victory of* is otherwise reserved for the Roman Emperor, the view that the ultimate goal of the Palmyrene 'royal family' was Rome rather than an independent Palmyrene state is substantiated. In making Septimius Wahballath Athenodorus, the contemplated heir and successor of Odainath, the only person to benefit from the salutary effects, the dedicator presents him, if not overtly as the Roman Emperor, at least as holding a position and a status similar, if not equal, to him. It is significant, however, that in presenting Zenobia, the Queen Mother and regent, as another beneficiary, the dedicator does not employ the second part of the formula. Instead, he confines himself to *ʿl ḥyy.*

The meaning and function of the formula appears to be quite different from the *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions that have been referred to above. The identity of the deity who as a divine recipient is held to bestow 'life' seems to be of only minor importance—if at all—. Any deity having the power may have sufficed. Similarly, there is no explicit reference to a social relationship between dedicator and beneficiaries so that its establishment or reinforcing cannot be the impetus for executing this inscription.[105] If the inscription, indeed, should be attributed to the city-council, then the only conceivable and reasonable motive is the expression of loyalty. But over and beyond, it is a general statement that Wahballath is the only legitimate ruler of the Roman Empire and that everyone is incited to treat him with due respect.

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[103] *IGLS*: 2560 and 2711/2. Palmyra yielded one more badly damaged example with the Greek version of this formula, originating from Diocletian's Camp. First published by Cantineau (1930: 33), Seyrig's (1931: 322) subsequent reading and interpretation assured that it should be dated between 293 AD and 303 AD, since it mentions Sossianus Hierokles, the governor of Phoenicia. He built the Roman camp known as that of Diocletian (*Inv.*VI: 2). As in CIS II: 3971, the formula and the beneficiaries are presented in the first lines of the text. According to Seyrig the reading is: ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας καὶ νείκης τῶν κυρίων ἡ[μῶν αὐτοκρατό]ρων καὶ καισάρων, *for the well-being and victory of our Lords and Emperors.*

[104] Bauer and Aland (1988: 1091) gives the following explanation of νίκη: "*d.Sieg*, dann als abstr. pro concr. *d. Mittel, den Sieg zu erringen* (doch vgl. auch die Sitte, v. der νίκη des Kaisers zu reden, als der Macht, die ihm den Sieg verleiht)".

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[105] Other inscriptions listing the Emperor as a beneficiary, however, may have such a motive. CIS II: 3912, a bilingual text found at Tayibeh in the vicinity of Palmyra, is dated to 134 AD. The Emperor Hadrian (117–138 AD) is the only beneficiary. The dedicator, a private person, also presents himself grandiloquently. Apparently, he financed the building of a room in a temple and the couch pertaining to it. In contrast with the majority of Palmyrene *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions, but like CIS II: 3971, the formula and the beneficiary appear at the beginning of the text, whereas the dedicator is mentioned later on. Perhaps this is the epigraphical expression of the inferiority of the dedicator's social status compared to that of the beneficiary. Overall, the dedication expresses the dedicator's loyalty to the beneficiary. However, this suggests that usually the dedicator occupies the most important position in Palmyrene *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions.

CHAPTER FOUR

FOR THE LIFE OF... WHOEVER

THE HATRENE PERCEPTION AND EMPLOYMENT OF THE FORMULA[1]

Preliminary remarks

The intensive excavation-programme initiated by the Directorate General of Antiquites of Iraq at the site of ancient Hatra in 1951 has uncovered the remains of a city that vies in splendour and magnificence with the desert-cities of Palmyra, Petra and Dura-Europos. The buildings of the monumental main sanctuary in the middle of the city are particularly noteworthy for their grandeur. In addition, a considerable amount of sculpture displaying a high degree of craftmanship has been found. A close examination of these impressive pieces of art, architecture and sculpture yields a picture of Hatrene culture that is an amalgam of western, eastern and local elements in iconographical themes and techniques.[2] It may be labelled, then, a true Hellenistic achievement.[3]

Hatra is located in the North-Mesopotamian steppe at about 50 km west of ancient Assur and about 80 km south-west of modern Mosul. Due to its topographical situation between the Euphrates and the Tigris, this area acted as a buffer between the Roman and Parthian superpowers. It was more than once the scene of an outburst of hostilities between them. It is not surprising that more than in Palmyra, an eastern, Parthian, cultural strand can be detected here. Statues representing human beings often picture them wearing 'Parthian dress' (Homès-

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[1] From the beginning, excavators have labelled the inscriptions found at Hatra with an independent numeration. Commentators are prone to indicate them with "Hatra no. 1" or "Hatra-inscription no. 1". Following Segal (1986), I shall abbreviate these rather extensive designations here to "H1", etc.

[2] Many authors have commented upon the composite character of Hatrene artistic achievements including Lenzen (1952), Ingholt (1954), Fukai (1960), Krunic (1964), Homès-Fredericq (1965), von Gall (1970), Schlumberger (1970), Drijvers (1970), Downey (1974), Colledge (1977a), Drijvers (1978a), Christides (1982), Downey (1988).

[3] Cf. Chapter 1.

Fredericq 1963: 21ff), whereas the development and employment of the *iwan*, as an architectural device very common in Hatra, is attributed to 'Parthian' effort as well, although its origin may be western (Colledge 1977b: 63ff).[4]

Apart from three Latin specimens, the excavations have yielded a relatively large number of Aramaic inscriptions of which, at present, over 400 have been published. Like the artistic expressions are embedded in a number of cultural strands, Hatrene writing is a local variation of the Aramaic script that circulated in the first centuries of the Common Era (Klugkist 1982: 85–124). Many inscriptions are short memento-texts consisting of the phrase *May be remembered (in good and beatitude), dkyr (lṭb wlšnpyr)*, and a name that is sometimes accompanied by a parentage. Others belong to statues and altars. Occasionally, a genuine building-inscription is found. A small number of votive- and building-inscriptions have preserved dates according to Seleucid Era which range from 409 (= 98 AD) to 549 (= 238 AD).[5] Although this period roughly coincides with the generally postulated heyday of Hatra,[6] the inscriptions only partially and tentatively fill in the large lacunae in our limited knowledge of the city's history.[7] Some of them do supply dates of particular building-activities, whereas

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[4] "The iwan is a rectangular hall, walled on three sides and roofed with one continuous barrel (or cradle) vault; the fourth (short) side has an arched opening occupying most or sometimes all of its width, and usually faces a rectangular court" (Colledge 1977b: 63).

[5] If the date of H293 is complete, then the oldest dated inscription belongs to the year 400 Seleucid Era, i.e. 89 AD (Segal 1986: 58).

[6] This is primarily based on the account of Dio Cassius. In LXVII, 31, 1, when describing Trajan's vain attempt to capture Hatra in about 116 AD, Dio relates that *the city was neither big nor fortunate*, καὶ ἔστι μὲν οὔτε μεγάλη οὔτε εὐδαίμων ἡ πόλις. In LXXV, 12, 2, however, when describing Septimius Severus' vain attempts to capture it in about 198 AD, he remarks that *the renown of the place was great for the many treasures and votive-offerings of Helios it harboured*, δόξα τε γὰρ τοῦ χωρίου ὡς καὶ πάμπολλα τά τε ἄλλα χρήματα καὶ τὰ τοῦ Ἡλίου ἀναθήματα ἔχοντος μεγάλη ἦν. Apparently, Hatra had rapidly developed from an insignificant place into a town especially known for its worship of the sun-god in the period between the Roman sieges. Moreover, it was dedicated to the sun-god as is implied by the legend *Hatra of Shamash*, *ḥṭrʾ dšmš*, on coins (Walker 1958; Tubach 1986: 286ff). Epigraphical findings corroborate this interpretation of Dio's different descriptions of Hatra. Most of the dated inscriptions referring to building-activities within the precinct of the main sanctuary indeed do belong to the second century AD.

[7] Cf. Drijvers (1977: 803–837) for the broad outlines of the history of Hatra. However, recent findings shed a new light on a number of topics dealt with in Drijvers' article.

Classical sources relate the vain attempts of Trajan (Dio Cassius: LXVIII, 31, 1) and Septimius Severus (Dio Cassius LXXV, 10–13 and Herodian III, 1–9) to capture Hatra. In 363 AD Ammianus Marcellinus (XXV, 4) describes it as a *long abandoned place, olimque desertum.* The Mani-Codex of Cologne appears to provide a fairly exact date others, albeit in a concise and incomplete way, inform us on institutions, legislation and social structure. Two inscriptions, though, can be dated positively to the end of the first century AD.[8] Shortly afterwards classical sources mention Hatra for the first time. Dio Cassius relates that Trajan proved himself unable to capture Hatra, indicating that the city's defences must have been well-established. Since the site's geographical conditions have but limited interest to this end—there are no natural barriers, except perhaps the ever prevailing drought and heat—, this entails that prior to Trajan's siege, the city must have developed a gigantic building-activity to construct defence-works like walls and towers. So far, the epigraphical record provides no information, whereas Dio Cassius (LXVIII, 31) describes the city as *neither big nor fortunate* in the times of Trajan's attack.

What were the reasons which prompted the founding of a city at a place, where drought and heat prevailed? Unlike Palmyra, Hatra was not a genuine oasis, although within the city-walls a number of wells probably produced enough water to sustain life for a considerable period of time (Stein 1941: 304). In addition, Wadi Tharthar passes nearby, approximately 4 km distant. Milik (DFD: 358) correlates the foundation of Hatra with the commercial spirit of Tigranes the Great (95–55 BC), who attempted to control at least part of the transcontinental trade-route from China to the Mediterranean.[9] Whatever the case, it is conspicuous that the rapid development of Hatra into a flourishing Graeco-Roman city largely coincides with that of Palmyra. The rise of Palmyra is closely bound up with the decline of the Nabataean Empire.[10] The loss of control of the main commercial arteries by the Nabataeans and the concomitant transferral of these routes from the Arabian peninsula to Egypt, along the Nile, and Mesopotamia, especially along the Euphrates, was an important factor

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for the capturing and sacking of the city by the Persians under the command of Ardashir I, viz. 240–241 AD (Klugkist 1982: 139, note 7; Chaumont 1979: 207ff; DFD: 355). Arab sources stand out for the legendary nature of their accounts on Hatra (Drijvers 1977: 818; Tubach 1986: 236ff). The same applies, more or less, to Syriac sources, although Bardaisan's allusion to a Hatrene law ordering the stoning of thieves (Drijvers 1965: 46–47; Degen 1977; Tubach 1986: 228) seems to be confirmed by recent epigraphical findings (H281, H343).

[8] H293: 89(+) AD; and H214: 98 AD.

[9] The indications which Milik finds in the Hatrene epigraphical record to substantiate his view are liable to doubt; for most of them better explanations than his have been offered.

[10] Cf. Chapter 3.

in the development of Palmyra from an insignificant oasis-born settlement into a major Graeco-Roman commercial centre. Many inscriptions do refer to commercial activities and thus substantiate the suggested economic causes for the city's prosperity.

It would only be natural to attribute the sudden prosperity of Hatra to the same event, especially since both cities are situated in the Syrian-Mesopotamian desert. Sir Aurel Stein (1941: 299) observed that Hatra is situated "on an ancient line of communication, important and yet little known, which once led from the economic centre of the Mesopotamian plain mainly through desert west of the middle Tigris towards northernmost Syria and Asia Minor". This important line of communication connected Seleucia-Ctesiphon, the ruins of which are located near modern Baghdad, with Nisibis. The latter, renowned for many reasons in Antiquity, is now situated in the south of modern Turkey. Among other things, Nisibis was the chief Roman bulwark against the Parthians and later against the Sassanians (Stein 1941: 303). The most natural route between Ctesiphon and Nisibis would be to follow the Tigris upstream as far as possible and then simply to go west. However, the left bank of the Tigris can be followed only up to Takrit at which point the river has to be crossed. Subsequently, the right bank can be followed but a little further up to a place called Baiji. Beyond that the southern end of the hill range of the Jabal Maqhul forms the right bank of the Tigris. Its steep and deeply furrowed slopes preclude the use of the river for traffic (Stein 1941: 304). At Baiji, the route takes its way through steppe-country to Hatra and beyond: Singara, Eski Mosul and eventually Nisibis. Many fortifications along the route suggest its importance (Gregory and Kennedy 1985: 45ff). These observations caused Sir Aurel Stein to believe that Hatra, situated approximately 100 km north-west of Baiji, "owed its origin and importance wholly to having been a 'caravan-city' in the truest sense of Professor M.Rostovtzeff's happily coined term" (Stein 1941: 300).[11] Like Palmyra, Hatra would have profited by the collapse of the Nabataean Empire. The ensuing interest for caravan-trade might account for its ever increasing importance and wealth from the end of the first century AD onwards.

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[11] Gregory and Kennedy (1985: 58) render this passage as follows: "Yet when considered with due regard to plain topographical facts they (i.e. the classical notices of Hatra, KD) suffice to make it quite clear that Hatra owed its origin, its position in the desert and its short-lived importance wholly to its having been a 'caravan-city' in the truest sense of Professor Rostovtzeff's happily coined term".

However, in spite of its strategic position in the midst of the desert and its impressive qualities as a main stronghold, the importance of Hatra as a commercial centre comparable with Palmyra is subject to doubt. Without willing to suggest that it played no role at all, attention should be given to the suggestion that, unlike Palmyra, Hatra was never a junction of caravan-tracks.[12] It is but a station on a track. Moreover, if the map offered by Sir Aurel Stein (1941: 301) is reliable, the main route even passes the city at a distance of about 25 km, a day's march. This implies that the importance of trade as a major source of wealth must have been limited. Moreover, contrary to the situation at Palmyra, the Hatrene epigraphical record has yielded so far only one inscription referring to trade. If the reading is correct, then *merchants*, *tgry'*, are mentioned in H65.

How then, can the legendary wealth of Hatra which is so unambiguously and plainly displayed by its archaeological remains be explained? The answer may lie in its qualities as a major stronghold.[13] Strategically, Hatra is ideally situated both for serving as a haven of refuge for the steppe-dwellers and as a centre of political and military power to control the people (Chaumont 1979: 223ff). A glimpse at the city-plan of Hatra (Drijvers 1977: 805; Bradford 1980, pl.24) immediately draws one's attention to the immense proportions of the main sanctuary. It is located right in the middle of the city and surrounded by a wall measuring about 438 × 323m. The excavations indicate that it contains a number of temples, each being dedicated to a specific deity, including Shamash, Allat, Our Lord the Eagle and the Hatrene triad consisting of Our Lord, Our Lady and the Son of Our Lords. In addition, the excavations have already yielded as many as thirteen minor temples located outside the precinct of the main sanctuary. They are likewise dedicated to a variety of deities; Baalshamin, Atargatis, Nergol and Nabu, amongst others. Considering the central position of the main sanctuary and the multitude of temples it harboured, inside and outside the main sanctuary, Hatra may have been a paramount religious centre at the service of the steppe-dwellers over and above a commercial one.[14] Its main source of wealth may have been largely derived, from the religious needs it eased. This is corroborated by the uncovering of cult banks, small offering boxes made of marble with a cylindrical body and a conical lid with a slit for inserting a coin. These banks seem to have counted among the most essential furnishings of Hatrene shrines. Such offering boxes are also known from Greece, especially from shrines that attracted large numbers of pilgrims like those of healing, oracular and mystery gods (Downey 1966: 97ff).[15] Homès-Fredericq (1960: 41) has observed that as a rule statues present the person in question making the ritual gesture of prayer. Downey (1977: 205ff) has also pointed out that so far Hatra has yielded only a very few representations of armed gods, so characteristic for caravan-cities like Palmyra. Their military dress is usually linked with their duty of protecting caravans. Meanwhile, the legend of coins from Hatra is *Hatra* (= enclosure) *of Shamash, ḥṭrʾ dšmš*. This suggests that as a whole the city was dedicated to Shamash and thus was a 'holy place' (Walker 1958: 167). Such a conception of the city's status and the origins of its wealth fully accords with Dio Cassius' peculiar remark about the sources of its renown, *the many treasures and votive-offerings of Helios* (Dio Cassius LXXV, 12, 2). Furthermore, it explains the extremely high penalty on theft recorded by H336 and H343, which were respectively found in the northern and the eastern city-gate. Presumably, the western and southern city-gates contained similar texts. In view of the contents of the law, the place of publication, at least, is peculiar and undoubtedly testifies to the importance attributed to it by the inhabitants of Hatra. It is significant too that these legal texts only deal with theft which has been treated as a capital crime. A city like Hatra must have been affected by other, perhaps even more severe, violations than theft alone.[16] However, apart from H342, likewise found in the northern city-gate, which seemingly deals with proper behaviour towards the

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[12] Given the line of the route drawn by Sir Aurel Stein, it would have been more natural for the ancient site of Jaddalah to have turned into a major centre, if trade is the decisive factor to account for the increasing importance and prosperity of Hatra.

[13] Some believe its military importance to have been the decisive factor in founding the city (Ahmed 1972: 103f; Bradford 1980: 74f).

[14] On different grounds Drijvers (1977: 824) suggests "... dass Hatra in gewissem

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Sinne das religiöse Zentrum für die Wüstenbewohner war, die dorthin kamen und die Tempel besuchten, eine Art von 'vormuslimischem Mekka', wie Hatra genannt wird. Ob damit Pilgerfahrten verbunden waren, wissen wir nicht mit Sicherheit, es ist aber nicht von vorneherein ausgeschlossen". Similar suggestions are made by al-Asil (1954), Altheim-Stiehl (1967: 283f), Schlumberger (1970: 124f), Segal (1986: 58) and Downey (1988: 159).

[15] Cf. Kaminski (1991).

[16] Another legal text found in the eastern city-gate seems to deal specifically with theft from the main sanctuary (H344), whereas yet another one from the main sanctuary (H281) apparently deals with stealing of tools and utensils used in building or restoring part of a specific temple.

participants of a particular ritual, no texts that might supplement this general law on theft have been found so far.

Both H336 and H343 decree that a thief, if he is *someone from outside*—a non-Hatrene—should be *stoned to death*, and that if he is *someone from inside*—a Hatrene—he is *to die the death of the god.* Despite the enigmatic expression, *death of the god*, theft obviously is still a capital crime. Even in Antiquity, though, death was considered to be a severe penalty for a crime such as theft.[17] It surely was not imposed irrespective of persons. However, if the city of Hatra as a whole should be considered as a 'holy place', then both the publication of a law on theft at the city-gates and the severe penalty are comprehendable.[18] Indeed, as most objects liable to theft were consecrated or dedicated to a particular deity, stealing such objects or stealing from within a sacred enclosure—if the status of Hatra as a holy place is to be emphasized—, then, is not so much an offence of human standards and values, but violates the divine order itself. Therefore, it is a capital crime.

The function of Hatra as a major religious centre is perfectly compatible with its military function as a stronghold and its rise as an independent political entity.[19] As a holy place harbouring many precious objects dedicated to Shamash, the sun-god, and other deities, it is obvious that it should be protected and defended appropriately. Considering the tribal character of religion and the multitude of temples and deities found in the city, Hatra must have served the interests of many a tribal group inhabiting the steppe.

The institutions of lordship and kingship in Hatra

The religious needs of different tribal groups collaterally implies the commitment of as many groups to Hatrene municipal affairs. By settling in the city, the élite of each group secured the promotion of tribal interests. On the other hand, this settlement and commitment enabled central authority, once it had been established as an important political factor, to exercize a firm hold on the different groups, which represented a rich source for military recruitment. The formation of a strong central authority took place during the first part of the second century AD, culminating in the institution of kingship in the sixties of that same century. The epigraphical record suggests that the institution of kingship should be attributed to two sons of lord Nasru, viz. Vologash and Sanatruq (Dijkstra 1990: 96f). It is unclear, though, whether they wielded the royal sceptre simultaneously or, more likely, succeeded each other. Perhaps Sanatruq assumed supreme power in his brother's place after Vologash had died prematurely. Whilst the institution of kingship became hereditary from Sanatruq I onwards, the exact term of each ruler is still unknown.

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[17] Cf. Bardaisan's *The book of the laws of countries* (Drijvers 1965: 47).

[18] It might be advanced that precisely the extreme high penalty on theft, demands its conspicuous publication at the city-gates. This may explain why no legal texts dealing with other topics have been found at the city-gates, so far. It fails to explain, however, why the penalty on theft was so severe.

[19] Chaumont (1979: 223ff) believes that as a political entity Hatra constituted a client-state of the Arsacid Empire. Its rulers were invested by the Arsacids. As a stronghold the city enabled them to wield the sceptre over the Arabic tribes roaming the desert. Of course these tribes were liable to pay tribute. The taxes were collected by the Hatrene rulers, who were supposed to hand them over to the legitimate Arsacid authorities or to spend

Sanatruq I was succeeded by his son Abdsimia who probably supported Pescennius Niger in his struggle for the imperial purple against Septimius Severus. In 198 AD he succesfully sustained Severus' siege and attack (Drijvers 1977: 817; Segal 1986: 62). Abdsimia in turn, was succeeded by his son Sanatruq II, who must have ruled the city until its fall in 240 AD. It is certain that he was alive in 238 AD (Dijkstra 1990: 88). So far no inscriptions have been found dated to the last two years of Hatra as an independent political entity, with the consequence that it is unknown whether Sanatruq II's son, Abdsimia, destined to succeed his father as a king, ever came to the throne.[20] If he did, then surely it was under an unlucky star.[21] H79 mentions another son of Sanatruq II by the name of Maana. H36 presents one of this king's wives, viz. Batsimia, *the mother of the Crown Prince* together with a daughter who listens to the name of

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them in their commission. With the decline of Arsacid power, Hatrene rulers increasingly behaved like independent monarchs. As a result they appropriated tax-money for their own use and for the benefit of the city. If Chaumont is correct, this too may be a factor in explaining the city's extreme wealth. Cf. also Wiesehöfer (1982: 438f).

[20] H28 describes him as *pšgrbʾ*, *the Crown Prince* Harnack (1970: 516ff).

[21] Besides those belonging to the Hatrene dynasty, one more 'king' by the name of Atalu, *ʾtlw* (H21), is known. He cannot be properly linked with the Hatrene dynasty. Segal (1986: 62) suggests that as the first Hatrene king he preceded Vologash. Surely, such a course of events is at odds with the rise of the Nasru-family during the second century AD who managed to turn itself into the Hatrene royal dynasty. Perhaps Drijvers' (1977: 824) suggestion that Atalu was a foreign king who payed his respects to a particular Hatrene deity is more appropriate.

Dushfari. H37 presents a daughter of Dushfari called Simia.[22] The family that became the royal dynasty must have played a prominent role in Hatrene political and social life from the beginning of the second century AD onwards. This, of course, depends on lord Nasru who is credited with building certain parts of the main sanctuary in 138 AD being the father of the subsequent king Sanatruq I (H272).[23] H274 also mentions a lord Nasru, who is described as the son of lord Neshryahb. As it was found in the immediate vicinity of H272, it is likely that they both refer to the same lord Nasru. If so, however, then lord Neshryahb is the grandfather of king Sanatruq I.

The institution of lordship, *mry'*, in ancient Hatra is a much debated issue. It is generally assumed that it preceded the institution of kingship as well as that both Vologash and Sanatruq I bore the title 'lord' before assuming royal dignity (Safar 1973: 94; Drijvers 1977: 821; Dijkstra 1990: 96). Despite its plausibility, it is not supported by any definite evidence (Segal 1986: 61). H348 refers to a certain *lord Vologash son of lord Nasru*, but the inscriptions mentioning a *king*

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[22] Cf. Appendix H for a tentative family-tree of the royal family.

[23] In the light of the epigraphical record, it is one thing to know that Sanatruq I's father is called Nasru, it is quite another thing to identify him as the builder of that name in H272, despite the fact that both carry the title 'lord', *mry'*. Until further evidence comes to hand, the identification may be accepted, albeit with reservation.

Certainly, the interpretation of H272 is problematical. At first sight it reports the building of certain parts of the main sanctuary by lord Nasru (1.1) that were restored by his grandson *Abdallah son of Tapsarra son of Nasru* (1.3) (Drijvers 1977: 821). H338 which is dated to 133 AD, however, mentions the same Abdallah as a dedicator. This suggests that in H272 the date at least refers to the building-activities of Abdallah. This implies that a grandson of lord Nasru already in the third decade of the second century AD was in a position to engage intensively in building-activities. If we assume that he was approximately 25 years old at this time, then surely his father Tapsarra, who in that case is a brother of the later king Sanatruq I, must have been about 45 years old. If Sanatruq is Tapsarra's younger brother, then he is of an advanced age—about 75 years—in 177 AD, the year to which our oldest proof of the existence of the institution of kingship is dated (H82). If he is Tapsarra's older brother, then he would be of an even more advanced age.

In Abdallah's genealogy in H272 (1.3), Nasru is not described as 'lord', whereas in 1.1 he is. This change may indicate that lord Nasru (1.1) is not to be identified with this Nasru and that therefore Abdallah is not a grandson of *lord* Nasru. The fact that a *lord* Neshryahb is mentioned as a beneficiary in both H272 and H338 substantiates such an interpretation. H338 moreover lists a son of Neshryahb by the name of Nasru as a beneficiary. He bears the title *the Elder*, *qšyš'*. Now, if Abdallah is a grandson of lord Nasru, why does he not relate himself to either lord Neshryahb or lord Nasru in terms of kinship? Grammatically, it is possible that in H338 the suffix of *brh* refers to Abdallah. Nasru, the Elder, then is his son. Having a son who already bears a title, however, rather suggests Abdallah to have been around 45 years old in 133 AD than 25. In summary, Abdallah son of Tapsarra son of Nasru is a contemporary of 'lord' Nasru. Considering his parentage, though, he may very well belong to a different branch of the same family.

Vologash (H193, H285 and H286) present neither a parentage nor a date. Thus, it is very hard to identify *lord* Vologash with *king* Vologash beyond doubt. Similarly, the epigraphical record amply testifies to king Sanatruq I's descent from lord Nasru, but about his lordship it is far less pronounced.[24] In fact a lord Sanatruq is mentioned only in H232. Again, the text is undated and does not provide Sanatruq's parentage. H112 and H124 moreover suggest that the name 'Sanatruq' is not restricted to the royal family. Nevertheless, H348 incontestably presents lord Vologash as lord Nasru's son, whereas H274, H351, H352 and H356 identify lord Nasru as *the son of lord Neshryahb*. Thus, it is suggested that, like the title 'king', the title 'lord' is hereditary. According to some commentators, it implies that there is but one lord simultaneously in Hatra, at least from lord Neshryahb onwards.[25] H272, however, clearly indicates that there may at least be two individuals bearing the title simultaneously. Nothing in H272 suggests that lord Neshryahb had already passed on when his son lord Nasru expanded his building-activities in 138 AD.[26] In addition, Safar (1973: 90f) and Drijvers (1977: 823) have demonstrated that a certain Worod bore the title at the beginning of the second century AD. Furthermore, if the information of H189 and H288 are combined, it is suggested that in 149 AD the title was incumbent on a grandson of Worod by the name of Maanu.[27] All this suggests that even if the title was hereditary in Neshryahb's family, then it may also be incumbent on others simultaneously. If the dating of H416 to 155 AD is not to be refuted *a priori*, then, next to Worod and Neshryahb, another lord is attested whose active period should be dated to the turn of the first to the second century AD.[28]

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[24] King Sanatruq I is presented as a son of lord Nasru in: H82, H196, H197, H199, H231, H345, H347, H353, H367, H368, H369, H370, H371, H375, H376 and H378.

[25] Cf. Safar (1973: 90) and most recently Aggoula (1990). Aggoula is correct in refuting the editor's dating of H416 to 667 (= 355 AD) or 567 (= 255 AD) Seleucid Era, for they are both posterior to the fall of Hatra. His proposals for a different reading suggesting either a date of 467 (= 155 AD) or 367 (= 55 AD) or even 267 (= 45 BC) and 167 (= 145 BC) are plausible. His grounds for discarding a possible date of 467 (= 155 AD) Seleucid Era, however, are doubtful, for he simply assumes that with the appearance of lord Neshryahb, the institution of lordship became hereditary and that there was only one lord at the time. As yet, the epigraphical record has not yielded any definite evidence for it. Whilst it might be ascertained that a number of descendants of one person subsequently held a certain office, it cannot be concluded that apparently this office was hereditary, and therefore exclusively held by one family.

[26] If lord Neshryahb is the father of lord Nasru in H272, then he must have been alive at the time of the dedication, for so far no *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions to the benefit of deceased persons have been found. Safar (1973: 91ff) assumes two individuals by the name of Neshryahb bore the title. However, this does not affect the interpretation of H272 that the office—if it was an office—was incumbent on two persons at the same time. Cf. Segal (1986: 61).

[27] In order to maintain his supposition that beginning with Neshryahb the insitution of lordship became hereditary and was exclusively held by one family, Aggoula (1990: 6) has to establish a more advanced date for H288. After a review of the photograph

For an answer to the question whether or not the title 'lord' was hereditary, it is important that H416 does not attribute it to lord Elkud's son. Similarly, apart from Maańu (H189), a number of descendants of lord Worod are known not bearing the title, viz. his son Astath (H123), his grandson Abdallai (H122) and his grandson Sanatruq (H124). The inscriptions mentioning the descendants of Worod all belong to the southern *iwan* of the central temple-complex of the main sanctuary (DFD: 362; Drijvers 1977: 821). Apparently, the title was not hereditary by definition. The fact that subsequent members of the Nasru-family bore the title may be closely linked with each member's personal political achievements and social status. As Drijvers (1977: 821) has already suggested, it is likely that until the institution of kingship Hatrene society knew more than one lord at the time. Their function may have resembled that of an Arabian sheikh, a paramount tribal leader.[29]

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published by Safar (1971), he arrives at the conclusion that instead of 460 Seleucid Era 360 should be read (= 59 AD). Although the inscription is badly weathered and the quality of the photograph is poor, four strokes preceding the sign of hundred, can definitely be counted. The drawing presented by Ibrahim (1986: 523) clearly has four strokes as well. Therefore, Aggoula's reading of the date of H288 is questionable.

[28] As a funerary inscription is in question here and as the title 'lord' applies to the father of the deceased, *prnhr br ʾlkwd mryʾ br nbwdyn*, it may be assumed that the father had already died some time ago. His lifetime, then, is to be dated earlier—fifty years is a wild guess—. Therefore, why Aggoula is so eager to have this inscription belong to a more advanced age is perplexing. After all, our knowledge of Hatrene history at the beginning of the second century AD is so rudimentary that even if the title 'lord' is incumbent on one person at the time, there is still enough opportunity to fill in Elkud's lordship at the turn of the first and second century AD.

[29] Segal (1986: 59) suggests that in Hatra chiefs of tribal groups were styled *rabba*, *rbʾ*, and that the full title of a senior sheikh was *abaya rabba*, *ʾbyʾ rbʾ*. The latter appears twice in the Hatrene epigraphical record. In H345 it might refer to lord Nasru, but probably refers to king Sanatruq. The other inscription reproduced by Segal (1986: 76), is badly damaged, but here too the title probably refers to king Sanatruq. He is additionally described as *the priest of the god Shamash*, *ʾpklʾ dy šmš ʾlhʾ*. H345 qualifies him as *the high-priest of the god Shamash*, *ʾpklʾ rbʾ dšmš ʾlhʾ*. Evidently, the designation *abaya rabba* either describes a particular office incumbent on the king next to that of 'high priest of Shamash', or it is a honorific title in order to indicate the king's munificence or his righteousness. As Segal (1986: 59) admits, the designation may be rendered as *patrician*.

In contrast with the title 'king', the status of 'lord' is very ambiguous. According to some it must have been similar to that of the 'king'.[30] In this view, it is generally held too that the institution of kingship marks the achievement of a certain political independency. Chaumont (1979: 223ff), Milik (DFD: 360ff) and Wiesehöfer (1982: 441f) picture Hatra as fully dependent on the Parthians before the institution of kingship. Milik (DFD: 361f) believes that the lords of Hatra "étaient choisis par le suzerain dans les différentes familles aristocratiques locales". He argues that with the appearance of Lucius Verus in Mesopotamia (162–165 AD) Parthian dominion was crushed. Instead the region became a protectorate of Rome. As an ally of Rome, Hatra obtained a number of privileges including that of the institution of kingship. Consequently, the title was more honorific than real (DFD: 362).[31]

Whilst cultural influences from both the East and the West distinguish the city, so far there is no indication whatsoever that either the Parthians or the Romans were politically or militarily involved in its municipal affairs before the crucial last ten years of its existence.[32] Neither H336 nor H343, the legal texts already alluded to, both of which are dated to 151 AD, mentions a Parthian or Roman overlord among the officials and institutions on whose authority they are promulgated. Reference is made only to local, municipal institutions and officials. Enigmatically, no lord of Hatra is explicitly mentioned either, especially since H342, another legal text found in the northern city-gate, lists king Sanatruq (I or II; the date is missing) as a co-promulgator. Therefore, in political terms the status of a Hatrene lord must have been quite different from that of a Hatrene king. It is possible, however, that king Sanatruq acted as a co-promulgator in H342 due to the nature of the law. This text, unfortunately rather damaged, appears to deal with religious matters, whereas both H336 and H343 deal with theft. If the view that the institution of kingship replaced that of lordship is maintained, then it may be argued that the king's and thus the lord's duties were primarily religious in character. This might explain the absence of lords and kings as co-promulgators in H336 and H343.

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[30] This might explain why some commentators are so eager to demonstrate that there is only one lord at a time in Hatra.

[31] Cf. Segal (1986: 62).

[32] Three Latin dedicatory inscriptions that should be dated to the third decade of the third century AD testify to the military presence of Rome (Oates 1955; Maricq 1957; Drijvers 1977: 825).

However, there may be another solution to this problem. The promulgation of the laws as recorded by H336 and H343 is presented primarily as a civic initiative, as a matter of state. It is true that we have only a limited insight into Hatrene political structure as well as into the nature of the relationship between Hatrene administration and the representatives of various tribal groups. Nevertheless, the institution of lordship may have been above all a tribal matter. As it is hardly conceivable that the city and its immediate surroundings are inhabited by only one tribal group, this would explain why there is more than one lord in Hatra at the same time. Despite the fact that lords do not explicitly participate in the promulgation of laws, they possibly count among the members of a particular group or institution that does. The first four lines of H343 are

> *byrḥ knwn d463 bmlkʾ dy*[33]
> *ʾlhʾ ʾṣṭbw šmšbrk rbytʾ [ ]*
> *wḥṭryʾ qšyšʾ wdrdqʾ w ʿrbyʾ*[34]
> *klhwn wkwl dy ʿmr bḥṭrʾ*
>
> *Translation:* In the month Kanun of 463 (= 151 AD). At the advice of the gods Shamashbarek, the *rabbayta* [ ] and the Hatrenes, old and young, and all the(ir) *Arabiye*, and all who dwell in Hatra reached agreement . . .

The law is presented as a unanimous decision of all the inhabitants of the city and its immediate surroundings. In distinguishing so many different groups, it displays a high level of administrative sophistication (Segal 1986: 60). It still may be asked, though, to what extent each of the three or four groups involved constituted a separate administrative or institutional body consisting of the representatives of the respective groups. Perhaps the lords of Hatra were members of a college that is indicated here as *the Hatrenes, old and young*. Or perhaps this was not a single institutional body, but the collective indication of two separate ones. In that case the lords may have taken seat in a college that is described as *old*. If so, then this college may resemble the institution of the γερουσία found in many a city of the Roman Empire.[35] On the other hand, in keeping with the suggestion that they are paramount tribal leaders, the lords may have taken part in the decision making as representatives of *all the Arabiye*. Whatever option is followed, it definitely suggests that as members of the tribal élite brought together in an administrative body, they participated in urban affairs on a regular base (Dijkstra 1990: 97).

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[33] Cf. for the rendering of *(b)mlkʾ*: Payne Smith (1903: 277).
[34] H336 inserts here: *wkwl dy ʿl wnpwq lḥṭrʾ, and all who enter and go out of Hatra.*
[35] Cf. for instance *IGLS* no. 4016 from Rouad which records the erection of a statue

The most plausible conception of the institution of lordship then is that, although it may be hereditary, it is non-exclusive. Unlike the institution of kingship, it is not so much a civic or political office, but a tribal one. Therefore, it should not be considered as the forerunner of the institution of kingship. In this respect the office of *rabbayta*, especially the *rabbayta of Arab* may be far more promising. After all, it is under his authority that the laws of H336 and H343 are promulgated.[36] The problem is once again, that our knowledge of Hatrene institutions and offices is so rudimentary that the status of this office can only be surmised. The term *rbytʾ* is to be rendered as *maior domus*. It suggests, though, that the authority of the holder of the office is a derived one. In the absence of a king, it is difficult to establish this source of authority. Is he the Parthian or Roman

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by ἡ βουλή καὶ ὁ δῆμος καὶ ἡ γερουσία, *the city-council and the college of Elders*. Another possibility is that *ḥṭryʾ qšyšʾ wdrdqʾ* equals ἡ βουλή καὶ ὁ δῆμος of Palmyrene texts. Since Segal's exhaustive article on the subject, it has been commonly agreed that the title *qšyšʾ* denotes a religious function. Segal (1967: 8) holds that as a designation for a civic dignitary it would be exceptional. Its basic meaning is *old man*. If it has a special connotation, then it designates a person of priestly status or a dignitary in an ecclesiastical setting. Segal's argument is based on the employment of the word in the Syriac Bible, which implies a specific Christian setting. Since it is restricted to a religious context here—which is reassured by Milik (DFD: 367ff)—, he assumes that in a pagan setting it would be too. Therefore *qšyšʾ* is usually rendered as *priest* or *symposiarch*. However, the occurrence of the word next to the designation *drdqʾ* in the opening lines of H336 and H343, strongly suggests that it describes a civic dignitary. In Hatra it may denote someone as a member of the city-council or an institution resembling the γερουσία found in so many cities of the Roman Empire. A similar interpretation of *qšyšʾ* has been proposed by Clermont-Ganneau in a Palmyrene context Segal (1967: 9). The conception of the word as *Elder*, *member of the City-Council* is substantiated by Pennacchietti's (1988: 50) interpretation of *qššw* in 1.2 of H344. Following a suggestion of Segal (1982: 113), he reads a verb instead of a noun, viz. third person plural masculine perfect paʿel of *qšš*. According to Pennacchietti, its meaning must be something like *deliberare in assemblea*. Such a sense is reinforced by the fact that in in H336 and H343 the verbal form *ʾsṭbw*, *they reached agreement* is found in the same position as *qššw* in H344. If Pennacchietti is correct, then the noun *qšyšʾ* and the paʿel of the verb *qšš* probably have the same frame of reference, viz. the city-council. The title *qšyšʾ* then describes a civic dignitary. Moreover, Hatrene vocabulary already has two other words designating priests, viz. *ʾpklʾ* (Aggoula (1989: 310), H67, H345, H352, H361) and *kmrʾ* (H5, H25, H27, H34, H39, H51, H145, H279, H384). Cf. for the γερουσία as a phenomenon: van Rossum (1988).

[36] Cf. Dijkstra (1990: 90) for the designation *rabbayta of Arab*, *rbytʾ dʿrb*, denoting a sort of 'minister of internal affairs'. Cf. also Segal (1986: 65).

suzerain's lieutenant? It is probable that he derives his power from a civic, municipal or a religious institution.[37]

The tribal factor in Hatrene society and administration

From the middle of the second century AD onwards, the city of Hatra experienced a number of civic institutions and offices that were engaged in its government as a state. Even the political involvement of tribal groups from the desert was institutionalized, so that the interest of the steppe-dwellers in urban affairs must have been considerable. It also suggests that the interaction between city- and desert-dwellers, between 'state and steppe', was dynamic (Dijkstra 1990: 90ff). Such an impression is substantiated by ll.7–9 of H79 which enumerate a number of agents that swear allegiance to king Sanatruq II. It is related that *they, Yahbarmaren and Elkud and whoever belongs to them with their possessions outside and inside, solemnly swear . . ., w'ḥdw hnw yhbrmryn w'lkwd wbnyhwn wnkyhwn dlbr wlgw.* The remark *outside and inside* only makes sense if it refers to the city-wall. This implies that part of the people that Yahbarmaren and Elkud represented, dwelt in the city, whereas another part lived outside in the desert (Dijkstra 1990: 82f). Furthermore, Segal (1986: 58f) adduces some inscriptions from Wadi Hawran, which on account of their palaeography he links with Hatra. The texts, published by Safar (1964), relate that in 98 AD tribal groups pastured their flocks in this area. Whilst these inscriptions are usually linked with Palmyra on account of their onomastics and the occurrence of particular terminology, the picture of city-

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[37] The title 'major-domo', *rbyt'*, abounds in Hatrene epigraphy. Most of the times it is not specified (H94, H116, H144, H218, H221, H223, H224, H251, H278, H336, H342, H343, H362, H381, H415). Occasionally, it is. A major-domo of (the temple of) Maren, *rbyt' d(y) mrn*, is mentioned in H195, H345 and H362; a major-domo of (the temple of) Marten, *rbyt' dmrtn*, in H364; a major-domo of (the temple of) Barmaren, *rbyt' dy brmryn*, in H109, H223 and H224; a major-domo (of the temple of) Allat, *rbyt 'lt*, in H384; and a major-domo of Arab, *rbyt' dy ʿrb*, in H223 and H364. In addition, the remains of l.1 of H16 possibly also specify a major-domo, *rbyt' dy [ ]*.

It is interesting that in H223 Afrahat is described as *the major-domo of Arab*, whereas in H224, inscribed on a socle found right beside the one containing H223 and recording the erection of a statue of Afrahat's son by the same dedicator that appears in H223, his title is simply 'major-domo'. This suggests that the unspecified titles of other inscriptions really were also specified, but that for some reason it was not held to be necessary to indicate the status of the person in question. Perhaps the person's name in combination with the title was sufficient for a Hatrene citizen to decide of what he was the 'major-domo'. Inscribing the full title *rbyt' dy X*, added to the solemnity of the occasion.

and desert-dwellers living in close interaction is nevertheless retained.[38]

Despite its urban context, it may be expected, that Hatrene inscriptions display the tribal character of society. Genealogies, usually comprising two or three and occasionally more generations, indeed do indicate that it was structured according to segmentary principles. References to tribal groups, though, are very scarce. In fact only three or four such groups are mentioned. The dedicator of H107, which is undated, presents himself as belonging to the Beni Raphshamash, *mn bny rpšmš*. At face value another two groups appear side by side in H214 and H293. The former is inscribed on the lintel of shrine no. 8 and relates that the erection of the temple is a joint venture of the Beni Taimu and the Beni Belaqab. The latter is attached to a funerary monument (*npšʾ*), where the same tribal groups are presented as the builders. The inscriptions are respectively dated to 98 AD and 89 AD. Usually the construction of a tomb is primarily a family matter rather than that of the tribe. Therefore, the Beni Taimu and the Beni Belaqab probably constitute minor tribal groups. Perhaps they each indeed only consist of the sons of one father who agreed to co-operate closely. In doing so, they formed one larger group for particular purposes, in which each of them retained its own identity. If, however, each group really is not much more than the sons of one father, then speaking of them as tribes, as does Segal (1986: 58), is an exaggeration. Certainly, they are tribal groups, but their dimensions allow their designation at most as clans, not tribes.[39]

The Palmyrene epigraphical record repeatedly presents larger tribal groups as 'Beni X'. So far Hatra has yielded only 'Beni Raphshamash' (H107). However, there may have been another way of designating one's tribal origin. In H242, H243 and H244 the dedicators are described as *Asilaya*, *ʿṣylyʾ*. This regular *nisbe*-formation of *ʿṣyl* usually indicates one's gentilic or geographic roots (Rosenthal 1974: 29; Degen 1973–74: 410).[40] Therefore, it should be rendered either as (*he*) *who belongs to the Asil* or as (*he*) *who is from Asil*. H243 is dated to 117

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[38] Cf. Chapter 3.

[39] It is possible that both the 'family' of Taimu and the 'family' of Belaqab has proved itself as the most powerful unit within a larger tribal group. As a result, it may have become customary to indicate each of these larger groups with reference to its most powerful unit. This, however, is a derived employment of the designation which does not directly interfere with the conception of the dimensions of the group to which it primarily refers.

[40] A similar designation of a tribal group might occur in H21. Perhaps it describes king Atalu as (*he*) *who belongs to/is from Natunashur*, *ntwn ʾšryʾ* (Drijvers 1977: 824).

AD, whereas H244 is possibly dated to 100 AD. This is substantiated by the fact that the dedicator of H244 is probably the father of that of H243. Since the latter is the dedicator of H242 too, it is likely that H242 should be dated to approximately 117 AD as well. However, the designation 'Beni Asil', which might indicate this particular tribal group, has not yet been found in Hatrene epigraphy.

A unique designation of a tribe occurs in H408, dated to 546 Seleucid Era (= 235 AD).[41] It was found in shrine no. 13. H406, inscribed on the lintel of the main entrance, relates that the shrine was dedicated to *the Gad of Ramgu*, *gdʾ dy rmgw* (al-Salihi 1990: 29). The same deity acts as a divine recipient of an *ʿl ḥyy*-inscription in H408. In the latter the usual categories of beneficiaries related to the dedicator in terms of kinship or friendship are cited first. Then, the list concludes in ll.5–6 with: *and for the life of all of Ramgu and for the life of all who belong to it*, *w ʿl ḥyʾ rmgw kwlh w ʿl ḥyʾ bny ddh kwlhwn*.[42] Instead of simply designating the people he has in mind as *Beni Ramgu*, *bny rmgw*, the dedicator makes a distinction between the tribe as an independent entity and the individuals it comprises.

Furthermore, a limited tribal group may be indicated by the concept 'house', *b(y)t* in Hatra. H3 records that a particular Divine Standard belongs to *the house of Aqba*, *bt ʿqbʾ* (Caquot 1952: 90; Drijvers 1970: 379). Although fiercely contested by Downey (1970: 198), both Caquot (1964: 270) and Milik (DFD: 407) suggest that the Standard alluded to in H200 is identical to that of H3. Iconographically, Downey is correct for the Standard of H3 definitely differs from that of H200. Epigraphically, however, Milik's suggestion is plausible. He restores ll.3–4 of H200 as: *[ʿ]l [s]myʾ [dy bt] ʿqybʾ*, *for the Standard of the house of Aqiba* (DFD: 405). Considering that in H3 *ʿqbʾ* may be written defectively, the same 'house' could be meant. If Milik is correct, then it should be inferred that a certain artistic freedom existed in representing Divine Standards. However, the drawing of H200 reproduced by Safar (1962: 60) seems to preclude his restoration *a priori*, simply because there is not enough space. This does not affect the observation, that Divine Standards were designated with reference to a 'house'. A 'house', then, constituted an independent social unit. This is substantiated by an inscription published by al-Salihi (1982: 140), which in two lines is engraved on the plinth of a cult-relief representing Hercules and, probably, Allat. It was found in one of the rooms of the temple of Allat. The middle of the relief as well as that of the inscription are badly damaged. However, the end of l.1 and the beginning of l.2 mention *the Gad* (or: *Fortune*) *of the 'house' of Raphshamash*, *gnd' dbyt rpšmš*. Since the 'Beni Raphshamash' are known as a tribe, it may be asked whether 'the house of Raphshamash' is an alternative designation for the same group of people or whether it only denotes the tribe's most important family. At present there is no conclusive proof for either of these options. In fact, they may not even be related at all. Nevertheless, like that of 'house of Aq(i)ba', the context of the designation 'house of Raphshamash' suggests it to be a social unit with a certain independence.

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[41] The inscription was published by al-Salihi (1985–86: 99ff) and has been commented upon by Aggoula (1990b: 407ff).

[42] Aggoula (1990b: 407) renders ll.5–6 as: *et pour la vie de tous les* r/dmgw *et pour la vie de tous ses cousins*. Although his interpretation is possible, he misunderstands the text. In l.5 *rmgw* denotes the tribe as a whole, being conceived of as an independent entity. Therefore, the suffix of *kwlh* is in the singular mode. Subsequently, in l.6 the members of the tribe are listed as beneficiaries. Accordingly, the suffix of *kwlhwn* is in the plural.

Thus the 'Beni Raphshamash' (H107) and presumably the 'Beni Ramgu' (H408) are the only tribes designated by name in Hatra. In addition, the adjectival indication *Asilaya*, *'ṣyly'*, may denote another one (H242, H243, H244). Finally, two minor tribal groups are known, viz. the Beni Taimu and the Beni Belaqab (H214 and H293).[43]

The employment of the formula ʿl ḥyy: *major dedications*

In Hatra the employment of the dedicatory formula *ʿl ḥyy* is not confined to inscriptions referring to or attached to buildings and artifacts with religious purposes as temples, altars and representations of deities. It is also a constituent of inscriptions belonging to statues of human beings. Whilst the former categories are parallelled in the Nabataean and Palmyrene epigraphical record, the latter may be considered as a genuine Hatrene conception. Simultaneously, the formula *lyqr* seems to be foreign to Hatrene vocabulary, where it occurs only once (H65). In contrast with Palmyrene practice, it is not attached to a statue, but to a *stele* carrying in relief the representation of an eagle and two Divine Standards. The *stele* was found in shrine no. 9.[44]

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[43] It may be significant that at present except for H107, the date of which is missing, and H408 (235 AD) all the inscriptions containing tribal designations should be dated to the end of the first and the beginning of the second century AD. This may be linked with the rise of Hatra as a city. As in Palmyra, then, municipal or civic structures gradually came to the fore as an organizing principle to the detriment of tribal ones. This process culminated in designating the various tribal groups inhabiting the steppe as one undifferentiated body corporate indicated by the overall term 'steppe-dwellers', *'rby'*, in the legal texts of H336 and H343.

> *byrḥ knwn šnt*
> *498 n[y]šʾ dy*
> *ʾqym ʿ[bd]smyʾ*
> *br yhybʾ*
> *lqr tgryʾ*
> *dy smyʾ*
> *ʿbdw*
>
> *Translation:* In the month Kanun of the year 498 (= 187 AD). This is the *stele* which Abdsimia son of Yehiba has erected in honour of the merchants who have made the Standards.

This text only is intelligible if *nyšʾ* (1.2) refers to the *stele* carrying the inscription. The erection of the *stele* compensates for the making of the Divine Standards and, as a consequence is an expression of gratitude.

The oldest dated Hatrene *ʿl ḥyy*-inscription is engraved in two lines on the lintel of shrine no. 8 which was dedicated to the god Nergol: H214.

> *bšnt 409 ʾqym ʾrzʾ lnrgl bny tymw*
> *wbny blʾqb ʿl ḥyyhwn wḥyʾ ʾbhthwn mn kyshwn*
>
> *Translation:* In the year 409 (= 98 AD) the Beni Taimu and the Beni Belaqab have erected the temple to Nergol for the life of themselves and the life of their fathers at their own expense.[45]

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[44] These standards are frequently represented in Hatrene sculpture, where they apparently represent a deity or a religious conception (van den Branden 1959; Hoftijzer 1968: 56f; Downey 1970; Shams 1980; Henig 1983).

[45] Although the context leaves no doubt that *ʾrzʾ* refers to the structure the inscription is attached to, opinions differ about its origin and exact meaning. In commenting on H60, Donner and Röllig (*KAI*: 301) render it as *cedar*. Following Safar, they suggest that perhaps the doorway was made of this type of wood. Caquot (1955c: 263) on the other hand believes it to be a Syriac word derived from Iranian *(ʾ)raza* rendered in Greek as μυστήριον, which occasionally refers to a building. Following another suggestion of Safar, Degen (1970: 223f) advances the reading *ʾdzʾ* derived from Latin "aedes, das auch 'Gotteshaus, Tempel' bedeutet", with which Segal (1986: 67) agrees. Yet another reading

The dedicators consist of two minor tribal groups who probably are exactly what they claim to be, viz. the sons of Taimu and the sons of Belaqab. It is not only uncommon for undifferentiated tribal groups to engage in the building of a tomb, as it is uncommon for them to engage in the dedication of a particular object. Palmyra, for instance, has not yielded one single dedication that was executed by an undifferentiated tribal group. Likewise, the Hatrene epigraphical record does not mention such groups as dedicators elsewhere. It would seem that we are dealing with two groups of genuine brothers, i.e. children of the same father. Two reasons may be adduced for such an interpretation of kinship-terminology here. First of all, on a religious level, it was simply not done to leave the deity who was supposed to act upon the dedication, ignorant about the identity of the suppliants or benefactors. In order to direct the blessings to the proper persons, he or she should be informed about this. Secondly, in a society that flourishes thanks to the phenomena of euergetism and patronage—the dedicators built the temple at their own expenses—, the identity of benefactors is of utmost importance socially for the acquisition of public esteem. Although we are unable to recover their exact identity, the social environment of the dedicators surely knew them by name which would be impossible with an undifferentiated tribal group.

Conforming to Palmyrene practice, the dedicators first of all list themselves as beneficiaries. Establishing the identity of the other beneficiaries is problematical. Commentators seem to agree on its reading and derivation, but their opinions differ about its meaning.[46] The following translations have been suggested: *ihre Väter* or *ihre Vorfahren* (Degen 1970: 224), *their chieftains* (Segal 1986: 60), *leurs*

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is presented by Teixidor (BES 1971: 484), i.e. *ʾwnʾ*, *dwelling-place*, "*habitation*" or "*chambre*". However, the drawings presented by both Degen (1970: 223) and Ibrahim (1986: 514) definitely preclude such a reading. The only issue liable to discussion is whether *ʾrzʾ* or *ʾdzʾ* should be read. Considering that Roman cultural influences are very rare in Hatra at the time H214 was executed and that *ʾdzʾ* does not feature elsewhere in the Hellenistic Near East as a building device, the reading *ʾrzʾ* as interpreted by Caquot might be preferred. One should be hesitant, though, in attributing a particular purpose to buildings designated as *ʾrzʾ* just because of the occurrence of the word as does Milik: "... les inscriptions 60 et 214 sont donc bien les texts des fondation des locaux destinés aux réunions des thiases" (DFD: 167). *ʾrzʾ* may be nothing more than a device for indicating a structure with a number of specific architectural characteristics. It may be asked whether the purposes of structures indicated with other architectural devices was so different that reunions like these did not take place there. Both Drijvers (1978: 173) and Aggoula (1972: 65–68; 1985a: 281f) subscribe to Milik's view.

[46] *ʾbhthwn* is the plural construct state with suffix third person plural male of *ʾb*, *father*.

familles (Aggoula 1988: 203). Aggoula does not account for his interpretation. Apparently, he has something like a *beit ab* in mind. The meaning of *ʾbhthwn* would be rather similar, then, to *(all) the members of their house, bny bythwn (klhwn)*, found in Palmyrene inscriptions. If, however, the dedicators consist of two groups of full brothers, then it should not be surprising when they include their fathers as beneficiaries. Occasionally, this happens in Palmyra too. Degen's suggestion that it refers to forefathers should be discarded, because it entails that they were already dead at the time of the dedication. This contradicts the usual employment of the formula *ʿl ḥyy*, both in Hatra and elsewhere. Segal considers *ʾbhthwn*, as a cognate of *ʾbyʾ*, to be rendered as *patrician* and in a tribal context probably as *chieftain*. It is obvious that in this sense too *ʾbyʾ* is an elaboration of the concept *father*, *ʾb*. Although it is grammatically impossible to harmonize Degen's conception of *ʾbhthwn* with that of Segal—Degen considers it to be a regular plural of the word *ʾb*, whereas Segal derives it from *ʾbyʾ*—, they actually may not preclude each other. Together, the sons of Taimu and the sons of Belaqab had the means for building a temple. In their capacity as *patres familiae* of prominent, wealthy Hatrene families, Taimu and Belaqab may have acted as chieftains. If, both families belonged to the most powerful ones within a larger tribal group, Taimu and Belaqab may indeed have been tribal chiefs. For the reasons dicussed above, however, the 'Beni Taimu' and the 'Beni Belaqab' are two groups of sons, each of which originates from a single father. Thus their members are easily identifiable so that consequently the dedicators and beneficiaries of H214 have to be close kin.

Another dated inscription referring to a major object of dedication is H272. Three lines are engraved on three blocks of limestone found in the debris of one of the northern gates of the courtyard of the main sanctuary. Unfortunately, the end of each line, especially the second one is badly damaged making it extremely difficult to establish a coherent interpretation.

[byr]ḥ ʾyr šnt 449 šwrʾ wʾbwlʾ dy bnʾ byt ʾlhʾ nṣr[w] mryʾ [ʿl ḥyyhy wʿl ḥyʾ] bnyhy wʾḥyhy
wʿl ḥyʾ mn dy lmryʾ rḥym bnʾ byt šmš ʾlhʾ rbʾ [ ] byt š[mš]
ʾlhʾ tqwm ʾnʾ ʿbdʾlhʾ br ṭpsrʾ br nṣrw bnyt ʿl ḥyʾ nšryhb m[ry]ʾ wʿl ḥyʾ b[nyhy]

> *Translation:* In the month Iyyar of the year 449 (= 138 AD). The wall and the gate which lord Nasru has built in the house of the gods for the life of himself and the life of his sons and brothers and for the life of whoever is dear to the lord. The builder of the house of Shamash, the great god [ ] am I, Abdallah son of Tapsarra son of Nasru. I have built it for the life of lord Neshryahb and for the life of his sons.

The usual interpretation considers lord Nasru to be the acting person in ll.1–2, whereas his grandson Abdallah is the subject in l.3. Accordingly, the date of l.1 has to refer to the efforts of lord Nasru only, whilst those of Abdallah must have taken place later, perhaps some twenty years. Primarily they restored the work initiated by lord Nasru (Degen 1973–74: 417; Drijvers 1977: 821). In keeping with this interpretation, *bnyt* (l.3) is rendered as *I have rebuilt.* Yet it would be practically impossible for lord Neshryahb (l.3) to be the father of lord Nasru (l.1), because it is likely that by the time his great-grandson worked on the temple he had died. If so, then his appearance as a beneficiary of Abdallah's dedicatory efforts is somewhat awkward for it would be totally contrary with the usual employment of the formula *ʿl ḥyy*. Safar (1973: 89 and 98), as a consequence, assumes that the lord Neshryahb who is mentioned is not the father of lord Nasru, but someone else who may not even be related to the house of Nasru.

To what event does the date of l.1 refer? Does it refer to the building-activities of lord Nasru or to those of Abdallah or, perhaps, to both? If it refers to those of lord Nasru, then it is enigmatic that Abdallah, who in fact executed the inscription, does not present a date for his own. Surely, the date of such an enterprise as the restoration of the works initiated by his grandfather would have been worth mentioning. If, on the other hand, it refers to Abdallah's building-activities, then the exact date of those of lord Nasru is unknown. Surely, they were of such dimensions that their date would have been worth mentioning. However, if this assumption may be applied, then the building-activities of lord Nasru must have belonged to the turn of the first to the second century AD.

The problem here resides in two closely related assumptions which both are questionable. The first is that Abdallah is a grandson of lord Nasru, a connection which is by no means obvious. In l.1 Nasru explicitly bears the title 'lord', whereas in l.3 it is absent suggesting that they are not one and the same person. If this is the case, then the other assumption, viz. that Abdallah *restored* the works of his grandfather can be discarded. The date in l.1 refers to the building-activities of both lord Nasru and Abdallah. They are contemporaries and may well have been distant relatives, if it can be assumed that lord Nasru is named after his grandfather. If so, then Abdallah and lord Nasru are full cousins. There is no need, then, for assuming that lord Neshryahb (l.3) is not lord Nasru's (l.1) father.[47] Although the text describes the efforts of two different persons, the accompanying inscription is executed by only one of them, Abdallah, as is implied by the use of the first person singular in l.3. Possibly, each of the building-activities was considered to be part of one single project.

The photograph published by Safar (1968: pl.I) shows a very carefully executed text, with a regular and consistent palaeography, suggesting that it was engraved on one single occasion, despite the two separate pieces of information it contains.[48] The first mentions that lord Nasru has built *the wall and the gate of the house of the gods for the life of himself and the life of his sons and his brothers and for the life of whoever is dear to the lord.* Since all the characteristic ingredients of an *ʿl ḥyy*-inscription are present, it might have been found as an independent text. Usually, it is assumed that lord Nasru is the subject of the following clause beginning immediately after *rḥym* (l.2). If so, why then is this activity of lord Nasru mentioned separately? Surely, its nature—the building of the temple of the great god Shamash—would have justified its inclusion among the dedicatory activities in l.1. It has to be inferred that lord Nasru was responsible for the building of *the wall and the gate of the house of the gods*. The builder of *the house of the great god Shamash* is Abdallah. The verb *bnʾ* (l.2) should not be read as a perfect, but as a participle which together with the personal pronoun *ʾnʾ* (l.3) designates Abdallah as the agent. Admittedly, this interpretation does not shed any new light on the enigmatic *tqwm* (l.3) which is usually held to be a verb. However, the subject is unknown due to the bad state of preservation of l.2 (Degen 1973–74: 418 and 422).

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[47] My reconstruction of family relationships in H272 is reinforced by H338. Here Abdallah son Tapsarra appears as a dedicator as well, whereas 'lord Neshryahb' and his son Nasru, i.e. of Neshryahb, are listed as beneficiaries. Of course it is possible, albeit for obvious reasons unlikely, that in H338 the suffix of *brh*, *his son*, refers to the dedicator, Abdallah. In that case, Abdallah may have named his son after his full cousin, lord Nasru.

[48] Depending on the interpretation of the missing part of l.2, it even may have contained three separate pieces of information. In that case the second piece, starting with *bnʾ* (l.2), ends with *tqwm* (l.3). The subject of *bnʾ* must have been mentioned then in the missing part of l.2. It is possible that its subject is *byt šmš ʾlhʾ rbʾ*, for H107 relates that *Barmaren has built the main sanctuary for Shamash, his father*. This suggests that building-activities were not exclusively initiated by private persons but also by institutions like temples. The third piece of information consists of the rest of l.3. In this case, as in the usual interpretation of H272, the verb *bnyt* (l.3) lacks a definite object.

The inscription distinguishes the nature of the relationship between the dedicators and the beneficiaries in its first and second parts. In the former the beneficiaries are related to the dedicator in terms of kinship only, being the dedicator himself, his sons and his brothers as well as *whoever is dear to* him. Three of these categories are well-known from Palmyra, where in *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions beneficiaries almost always belong to the dedicator's close kin. They picture him in his most important vertical and horizontal kinship-relations. However, the nature of the relationship between the dedicator and the last category of beneficiaries, *whoever is dear to the lord*, is enigmatic. This category occurs in exactly the same position in lists in two other Hatrene inscriptions, viz. H107 and H290. Certainly, the sequence of beneficiaries suggests declining importance as the list continues, as though there is an increasing emotional distance between dedicator and beneficiaries with those being mentioned first mattering most. At face value, this is contrary with the wording of the text. However, in societies in which the mechanism of patronage is important for structuring social relationships, kinship and friendship-terminology is often used to denote patron-client bonds. In Palmyra the concept '(his) friend', *rḥmh*, is used to mark someone as a patron. 'Whoever is dear to the lord' in H272, however, suggests a rather large and undifferentiated group of people. It is hardly conceivable that patrons of lord Nasru are meant. Indeed, this would contrast both with the position of this group among the beneficiaries—if they are patrons their importance demands a more prominent place—and with their anonymity—if they are patrons they surely would have wished to be indicated by name to increase their prestiges—.[49] It is more likely that, rather than a client, lord Nasru is a patron himself.

However, in such societies as being discussed, kinship and friendship-terminology is not exclusively used to describe the client's bond with his patron. It may equally describe the patron's bond with his

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[49] It is impossible that the phrase refers to the dedicator's 'house', although the position among the beneficiaries corresponds to *bny byth* in Palmyrene inscriptions. In H290, however, the phrase comes immediately after the dedicator's 'house'. This reinforces my suggestion that the beneficiaries are enumerated according to a scale of increasing social distance to the dedicator.

client (Saller 1989: 57ff; Wolf 1966: 16ff). Basically, it intends to characterize the nature of the social relationship, not a partner in particular. Therefore, ‘whoever is dear to the lord’ refers to the clients of lord Nasru. Such a concept accounts both for their position among the beneficiaries and for their anonymity as well as explaining the peculiar wording of the text. Instead of indicating them by an independent noun, these beneficiaries are described by a phrase. Thus, they appear as an undifferentiated group of people, each member of which more or less keeps his own individuality.[50] This upholds the sociological observation that in segmentary society a patron’s clients never act as a corporate body, but each of them has his own personal relationship with the patron. Only the patron may refer to them as a whole. In listing them among the beneficiaries of his dedication next to his immediate kin, Nasru reinforces his bond with each of them.

The beneficiaries of Abdallah’s dedication, on the other hand, are not related to the dedicator in terms of kinship. With the use of suffixes being absent, nothing suggests social closeness or dependency between dedicator and beneficiaries. Neshryahb is simply described as *the lord.* If he is a tribal chief, his prominent social position remains undisputed. Like his son Nasru, he probably acted as a *pater familias* and a patron for many close and distant relatives as well as for genuine clients who were not necessarily related to him by kinship ties. Within the larger tribal group to which both Nasru and Abdallah belong, the family of Neshryahb manifested itself as the most powerful, thus constituting the tribal élite. Neshryahb may have acted as a patron towards his nephew. The latter, in turn, expresses his appreciation by having both the religious and the social credit as well as the prestige which he expects to gain through his building-activities channelled towards his uncle and patron. Without the patron's help he probably would have been unable to engage in them at all. To enhance his gesture, Abdallah includes the lord's sons as beneficiaries. If this reconstruction of the familial relations in H272 is correct, then it is interesting that lord Nasru, as a son of lord Neshryahb, features among the beneficiaries of Abdallah's, his co-dedicator's, achievements.[51]

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[50] In the rare instances where *rḥmh* appears in Hatra, its meaning fully accords with this interpretation. H36 and H381 record that a statue, respectively representing a princess and a dignitary, is erected by someone described as *rḥmh.* Usually, the social status of the person who erects a statue is inferior to that of the person honoured. As it is impossible for *rḥmh* to describe the dedicator as a patron, it must describe him as a client. The interpretation of *rḥmh* in H13 is ambiguous for it largely depends on the interpretation of the preceding *nṣrʾ*. If it is derived from the verb *nṣrʾ*, *to protect*, then its meaning must be *client.* If it is derived from the verb *nṣr*, *to exalt*, then *rḥmh* can mean nothing but *patron.* The former corresponds with the usual employment of the concept in Hatra and is therefore the most plausible interpretation. Consequently, H13—a drawing is found in Caquot (1952: 96) and Ibrahim (1986: 493)—should be translated as: *Lo! May Gadyahb son of Neshri son of Oge and Absa son of Abdnergol, the protégé, his client, be remembered for good before Zaqiqa and whoever answers (?). May they be remembered for good.*, *lʾ dkyr gdyhb br nšry br ʿgʾ wʿbsʾ br ʿbdnrgwl nṣrʾ rḥmh lṭb qdm zqyqʾ wkwl dlʿn (?) hnw dkyr lṭb.* Apparently, the inscription was executed by Absa, the client, which explains why Gadyahb, the patron, is mentioned first.

Like H214, H403 presents an *ʾrzʾ* as an object of dedication. It consists of two lines engraved on the lintel of the main entrance of shrine no. 12, the temple of Nabu. As Aggoula (1985a: 281) correctly suggests the reading should be *ʾrzʾ* instead of *ʾdzʾ*.

> *[lṭ]b dkyr šmšʿqb br ḥnynʾ ʾrdklʾ dbnʾ*
> *[ʾr]zʾ hdyn lnbw ʾlhʾ ʿl ḥyʾ bn[yhy]klhn*
>
> *Translation:* May Shamashaqab son of Hanina, the architect, be remembered for good, for he has built this temple for the god Nabu for the life of his sons [ ] all of them.[52]

The dedicator's name is common in Hatra (Abbadi 1983: 53); that of his father though, is very rare (Abbadi 1983: 20). He may be a brother of the dedicator of H68, but there is no definite proof for this. Another brother by the name of Dara or Dada may feature in H389 for his father is also called Hanina. If al-Salihi's restoration is correct, then the dedicator reinforces the bond with his clients in listing them, next to his sons, as beneficiaries of a dedication.[53]

H107 also presents a major object of dedication. It is inscribed on a limestone table found in the small *iwan* adjoining the great southern

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[51] It is, of course, possible that the restoration at the end of l.3 is not *b[nyhy], his sons*, but *b[ny], my sons*. In that case, Abdallah, after having directed part of the credit and prestige towards his patron, includes his own offspring among the beneficiaries. However, since the dedicator himself is not even mentioned among them, it is suggested that close kinship relations between dedicator and beneficiaries are absent.

[52] al-Salihi (1983: 142) suggests in his translation that the end of l.2 should be restored as *bn[yhy wʿl ḥyʾ mn dy rḥym lh] klhn, his sons and for the life of whoever is dear to him, all of them.* According to the drawings reproduced by al-Salihi (1983: 141) and Abdulla (1984: 116), *klhn* is written slightly above the line. There is enough space, then, for accommodating the proposed restoration. In the light of Hatrene epigraphy as a whole, it is moreover very plausible. Therefore, Aggoula's (1988: 200) restoration *bn[yhy wʾḥh] klhn, his sons and his brother*, should be discarded. He may have failed to notice the position of *klhn*.

[53] Cf. previous note. For the possible familial relationship of the dedicator with that of H68: cf. the comments on H68 below.

iwan of the central temple-complex of the main sanctuary (DFD: 372). Although a date is missing, it is thought to belong to the beginning of the second century AD (Drijvers 1977: 829). Whilst the reading of most of the text is straightforward, its interpretation however has yielded a range of opinions. Since for the greater part they do not regard the subject of the present inquiry, their discussion will be brief.[54] Excepting one issue, Milik (DFD: 377) presents the most coherent interpretation.

[’]n’ [b]r ’b[y]gd [br]
gdy br ’bygd br kbyr[w][55]

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[54] Opinions differ over the precise meaning of *sgyl*. The context leaves no doubt that it is an architectural device, but what precisely it denotes is far less clear. Following Safar, Leemhuis (1982: 53ff) claims that it is a particular part of the temple of Shamash, i.e. "the *sacracrium*, a sort of chapel where the treasures of the temple and its liturgic vessels and utensils were kept". Milik (DFD: 386) arrives at a similar conclusion: "Je suggère . . . que le terme *sgl*, ou *sgwl*, étymologiquement "propriété, richesses" désigne en réalité le Conseil d'administration des biens du sanctuaire, correspondant à la "Trésorerie", *‘nwšt’*, du temple de Bel à Palmyre". He renders *sgyl*, though, as "qui fait partie (*litt.* est propriété) du" (DFD: 378). Aggoula (1972: 40) translates *theatre*. Degen (1973–74: 409) considers it to be the name of the temple of Shamash. Drijvers (1978: 161) adds: "which is perhaps a reminiscence of *esangila* the great temple of Marduk at Babylon".

The status of following *hykl’ rb’* is important for the interpretation of *sgyl*. Degen and Drijvers consider it to be an apposition to *sgyl*, whilst Milik (DFD: 378), Caquot (1964: 253), Aggoula (1972: 40) and Leemhuis (1982: 54), believe that each of them refers to a separate building. Among the latter, however, there is no concensus about the identity of *hykl’ rb’*. Caquot and Leemhuis, both following Safar, seem to envisage the entire precinct of the main sanctuary. Aggoula visualizes the square temple dedicated to Shamash. Milik, finally, offers no definite opinion.

In Hatrene epigraphy a genitival relation, which has to be assumed in the latter case, is usually indicated by the *nota relationis d(y)*, as in l.5: *byt ḥdy’ ‘ly’ d[y] sgyl*. Although Aggoula (1969: 98; 1972: 39) does not read anything at the end of l.5, the clear photograph and the drawing of H107 (Safar 1962: 28) definitely show traces of a character after *‘ly’* making the reading of the *nota relationis* only natural. Since the use of the proper construct state is avoided, it is likely that *hykl’ rb’* is in apposition to *sgyl*. It does not refer to the entire precinct of the main sanctuary, but only to one or a part of its buildings. In view of the provenance of the inscription, the central temple-complex or more specifically its southern *iwan*, may be meant. Here, the interpretation of *byt ḥdy’ ‘ly’* (l.5) is important. As Caquot (1964: 252) has already suggested, it is generally agreed upon that *‘ly’* qualifies *byt ḥdy’*. It is then, a ὑπερῷον. Although one should be hesitant in deriving a building's destination from architectural devices, Milik (DFD: 381ff) has convincingly pointed out that the use of a temple's first floor as a meeting place for religious reunions was widespread in Antiquity. As such reunions were believed to bring about a state of bliss, this corresponds very well with *ḥdy’* here. The dedicator assisted the god Shamash in building a first floor to his temple. The archaeological context suggests that the central temple-complex, or part of it, was meant because the square temple immediately behind it does not seem to have had a first floor. If it can be assumed that the *elevated house of joy* refers to the first floor of the southern *iwan*, then both *sgyl* and *hykl’ rb’* refer to that *iwan*.

[55] Milik (DFD: 377) reads *kby d[y]*. Although the expression *Y dy mn bny X*, that is

> *mn bny rpšmš ʿdryt*
> *lšmš ʾlhʾ rbʾ ʿbd*
> *ṭbtʾ byt ḥdyʾ ʿlyʾ d[y]*
> *sgyl hyklʾ rbʾ dy bnʾ*
> *brmryn lšmš ʾbwhy ʿl*
> *ḥyy wʿl ḥyy mn dy rḥym ly k[lh]*
>
> *Translation:* I [ ] son of Abigad son of Gaddai son of Abigad son of Kabiru from the Beni Raphshamash have assisted Shamash, the Great God, the Benefactor, with the elevated house of joy of the SGYL, the great temple, which Barmaren has built for Shamash, his father, for the life of myself and the life of whoever is dear to me, all of them.

Like part of H272, the text is in the first person singular. The most conspicuous part of information, though, is that 'deities' engage in temple-building which apparently was not entirely a matter of (joint) private enterprise. Temple-funds could be employed to this end, not only in the expansion of a deity's own temple (ll.3–4), but even for the erection of a suitable accommodation for another (ll.6–7). Admittedly, the familial relationship between Barmaren and Shamash suggests that their worship was closely linked, fastening the co-operation of the institutionalized bodies which attended to it. Barmaren's building-activities to the benefit of *his father, Shamash,* are more easily to grasp in this context. Nevertheless, it remains a noteworthy enterprise for a religious organization to engage in the sheltering of a deity other than its own patron. This does not suggest that different gods competed with each other for worshippers for it has amply been demonstrated that 'paganism in the Roman Empire' and Antiquity was marked by an overriding tolerance (MacMullen 1981; idem 1984). It is remarkable that the 'temple of Barmaren' had the means to supply the costs of an extensive project like this in addition to the maintenance of its own organization, which must have been rather extensive

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abundantly used in Palmyra strongly suggests the employment of the *nota relationis* here, both the photograph and the drawing of H107 (Safar 1962: 28) as well as Ibrahim's (1986: 508) drawing show the characters at the end of l.2 to be ligatured. This favours the reading *kbyr[w]* instead of *kby d[y]*, despite Milik's allegation that *dy* is indispensable before *mn bny* (DFD: 378). Although it is possible that *[dy]* should nevertheless be restored after *kbyr[w]*, it is grammatically unnecessary. The reading *kbyrw* is reinforced by H245, which records the dedication of someone by the name of *Abigad son of Kabiru son of Abigad, ʾbygd br kbyrw b[r] ʾbygd.* Cf. Appendix H.

as well, as H35 suggests. H109, H223 and H224 record a *major-domo of Barmaren, rbyt' dy brmryn.* Since the organization must have been extremely rich, Barmaren probably was ranked amongst the most popular deities in Hatra.

Another salient feature of H107 is the length of the dedicator's genealogy. Usually only two or three generations are listed, but five may be counted here.[56] In tribal or segmentary society, genealogies are of the utmost importance and serve various ends. A person's genealogy defines his place in society by his relationship to a group, in which the members can trace a common descent. The longer a genealogy, the larger the group of people addressed. In turn, the scope of a particular enterprise often defines a genealogy's length.[57] By presenting his genealogy at length, a chieftain indicates the dimensions and concomitantly the strength of the group of people he claims to represent. Apart from a number of personal qualities, this is an important factor consolidating his power and influence. On the other hand, genealogies enhance a person's status and prestige, especially if he is able to take pride in one or more illustrious ancestors. In that case, the genealogy often concludes with that famous forefather or the most famous of them. Sometimes the father of the illustrious ancestor is mentioned, because he may take pride in having procreated such a respected member of society, even posthumously. Someone using his genealogy in order to enhance his own status generally belongs to the tribal élite; a logical consequence of his illustrious ancestor's efforts.

The full genealogical description of the dedicator of H107, whose name, on account of papponymy, may be *Gaddai, gdy,* suggests that he belongs to the élite of the Beni Raphshamash. Simultaneously, his genealogy proper suggests that he represents a particular segment of the tribe. The members of the latter are rallied by tracing their common descent to Kabiru, *kbyrw* (1.2). In keeping with the principles for structuring segmentary society, the 'Beni Kabiru' then constitute a sub-tribe or clan of the Beni Raphshamash. The dedicator must have been a prominent member of Hatrene society, whose building-activities in aid of the great god Shamash should not create any surprise. Since 'Shamash' is a constituent part of the tribal name 'Beni Raphshamash', it is probable that a close relationship existed between the deity and the tribe. Given that Shamash was the patron-deity of Hatra, the Beni

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[56] Another exception to this rule is H79 (Dijkstra 1990).

[57] Cf. Dijkstra (1990: 90ff) and the literature cited there.

Raphshamash may have constituted, if not the sole, one of the leading tribes of the city and its immediate surroundings. This prominent position of the dedicator of H107 may illuminate the description of the beneficiaries. As usual the first beneficiary is the dedicator himself. The others, however, are indicated by the same undifferentiated expression as that in the first part of H272: *whoever is dear to me, all of them*. The absence of 'sons and brothers' might be explained by the fact that the dedicator simply had none. If so, then the suggestion which was made above about his name is strengthened. On the other hand, although it is less likely, his status as a member of the tribal élite may have been so exalted that everybody who belonged to the tribal group he represented was dependent on him, even his sons and brothers. Whatever the situation, the undifferentiated group of people described as *whoever is dear to me* may have corresponded with the sub-tribe of the 'Beni Kabiru'. The genealogy of the dedicator suggests that this is the group of people whom he, as a patron, represented. Reciprocally, this is the group of people that, perhaps as clients, in any case like clients, depended on him. In the public presentation of their relationship, the dedicator once more commits them to him. Simultaneously, each member of the group of beneficiaries glories in his patron's achievements.

If Aggoula's restoration of H367 is creditable, the temple of Allat appears as another major object of dedication of an *ʿl ḥyy*-inscription. It is engraved in one line on at least ten blocs of limestone that were used in the construction of the temple. It is more than 700 cm long and it is the best preserved of three apparently identical inscriptions, all fixed to the walls of the temple. Of the other two H368, measuring 650 cm, shows the best state of preservation.[58] Compared to H367 and H368, H369 has to be restored almost completely.[59] The reading of H367 with the suggested restoration of Aggoula (1986: 363) is:

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[58] Using the photograph presented by al-Najafi (1983: pl.V, 3), the text of H368 is: *[ ] ʾlt snṭr[ ]kʾ br nṣrw mryʾ [ ]smyʾ pšgryb[ ] brh dkyr lṭb*. Aggoula (1986: 364) reads, including restorations: *[bytʾ] dbn[ʾ lʾ]lt snṭr[wq m]lkʾ br nṣrw mryʾ [wʿb]smyʾ pšgryb[ʾ] brh dkyr lṭb*.

[59] The photograph reproduced by al-Najafi (1983: pl.V, 4) shows that H369 is inscribed on four blocs of limestone with the text: *byt dbn[ ] ʾlt [ ]rwq d[ ]myʾ [ ]*. This reading has been followed by Ibrahim (1985–86: 91). The restored text of Aggoula (1986: 364) is: *byt [ʾl]t dbn[ʾ snṭrwq mlkʾ br nṣ]rw mr[yʾ wʿbs]myʾ [t]rynh*. Aggoula is probably correct in reversing the order of the first two blocs, but why does he present the name of the goddess as almost completely restored, when it is clearly legible? Similarly, he presents *[nṣ]rw mr[yʾ]* as legible, whereas neither al-Najafi's photograph nor Ibrahim's drawing

> *bytʾ dbnʾ lʾlt snṭrwq mlkʾ br nṣrw mry[ʾ ʿl ḥy]ʾ ʿbsmyʾ pšgrybʾ brh lṭb dkyr*
>
> *Translation:* The house that king Sanatruq, son of lord Nasru, has built for Allat for the life of Abdsimia, the Crown Prince, his son. May it be remembered for good.[60]

If Aggoula's restoration is correct, then king Sanatruq I dedicated the temple of Allat *for the life of* his son. The building of this temple must have taken place somewhere during the last thirty years of the second century AD. At least in the period of time after Sanatruq I assumed kingship and before Abdsimia's succession. Despite the fact that the royal family is concerned here, the relationship between dedicator and beneficiary is purely familial. This corresponds with the Palmyrene employment of the formula. However, because the royal family is concerned, this inscription does not only convey the pious

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shows any trace substantiating his reading. Rather than *[ ]rw mr[ ]* the reading should be *[ ]w sr/d[ ]*. Finally, Aggoula's addition of the last word is mere conjecture. al-Najafi reports that another bloc was found containing the characters *d/rynh*. As he had no idea where to put it in the context of the inscription, he did not include it in his photograph. Is the reading correct? The set of characters bears much resemblance to *[b]r(y) nṣ[rw]*, especially since the difference between "h" and "ṣ" is very slight in Hatrene script. Why is Aggoula so eager to restore *[t]rynh* as a synonym of *pšgrybʾ*? The latter, usually rendered as 'Crown Prince', is very well attested in Hatra, whereas the occurrence of the former would be confined to this one instance. Moreover, if the supposition that the contents of H367, H368 and H369 are identical is correct, why should the vocabulary in one of them be different from that of the other two?

[60] Aggoula suggests that the characters needed for his restoration were inscribed on exactly one bloc of limestone which now is missing. It may be argued that since there are three identical inscriptions, it is hardly conceivable that precisely this part of the text is missing entirely in all three of them. It could of course be mere chance, but it is improbable. H368 is even more incomplete at precisely this point, whereas H369 is almost wholly restored. Aggoula's arguments substantiating his restoration are not convincing. He believes his restoration to be dictated by the singular mode of *lṭb dkyr* and he assumes the subject of the expression to be king Sanatruq. If Aggoula's restoration is rejected, then the copula "w" has to be restored between *mryʾ* and *ʿbsmyʾ*, as al-Najafi suggested. According to Aggoula, the subject of *lṭb dkyr* then is a plural—Sanatruq and Abdsimia—and therefore *lṭb dkyr(y)n* would have been expected. However, the subject of *lṭb dkyr* is not necessarily a person for it could be the event of the temple's construction. In that case, it commemorates that it was initiated by the royal family.

A more decisive argument in favour of Aggoula's restoration is that if it is rejected the copula has to be restored at a spot that does not show any traces of mutilation. Of course, the scribe may have missed a character. Furthermore, the photograph is very dark and some of the characters are hardly legible (al-Najafi 1983: pl.V, 2). The drawing of al-Salihi (1985: 133) clearly shows the copula between *mryʾ* and *ʿbsmyʾ*. On this basis, Aggoula's restoration can be provisionally accepted, especially since the drawing of Ibrahim (1985–86: 91) shows no traces of the copula either.

wish of Sanatruq I for the future good of his family, nor does it merely intend to enhance the royal family's prestige. It is a political statement too. Firstly, it presents Abdsimia as the person destined to succeed Sanatruq. Furthermore, it establishes a link between the goddess Allat and the royal family.[61] The initiative for the building of her temple seems to have resided with the king. Perhaps the king aimed to secure the allegiance of a particular tribal group by accommodating its patron-deity. Allat appears to have been especially worshipped by desert-dwellers (Drijvers 1978b: 350) and this fact, together with the relatively late erection of the temple of Allat suggests that she is not a deity that belongs to the original core of the Hatrene pantheon. Next to the usual connotations of the formula, king Sanatruq expresses his hopes for the continuation of the good relationship with the worshippers of Allat by his contemplated successor. Even if Aggoula's restoration is incorrect and al-Salihi's (1985: 133) drawing of H367 showing the copula between *mryʾ* and *ʿbsmyʾ* is accurate, then the last part of the interpretation would still be applicable. Then, the building of the temple would be a joint enterprise embarked upon by the king and the Crown Prince.

H290 likewise alludes to a major object of dedication. It was found inside the precinct of the main sanctuary, but commentators fail to indicate its exact provenance (Aggoula 1975: 190; Degen 1978: 84; Teixidor 1980b; Aggoula 1988: 204f). They do, however, describe it as a monumental inscription, especially as each character had been inlaid with lead. The text, in seven lines, is engraved on a table of limestone. Its original width is estimated at about 150 cm. Only the right-hand side up to *c.*87 cm remains implying that approximately a third of each line is missing. Of course the interpretation of H290 depends largely on the supposed contents of the missing part. A drawing of the remaining text is reproduced by Ibrahim (1986: 524).

[bš]nt 504 ʾsṭwʾ [ ]
ptwrʾ mhymnʾ dbrmryn [ ][62]

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[61] This link is reinforced by the fact that the names of Sanatruq and, to a lesser extent, Abdsimia are scattered all over the place.

[62] A major issue arises out of the interpretation of *ptwrʾ mhymnʾ* (l.2) which is closely linked with the restoration of l.1. Aggoula (1975: 204ff) is convinced that *mhymnʾ* is only used to describe someone as a confidant. Since it qualifies *ptwrʾ* here, the latter has to designate a profession which according to Aggoula is that of the dedicator. From Nabataean examples, he proposes to interpret it as "devin", *soothsayer* or *interpreter of dreams*. This

qšyšʾ mn byth dnpš[h][63]
kppʾ 13 wṭpʾ bšw[rʾ][64]
ʿl ḥyʾ ʿbdsmyʾ mlk[ʾ]
w ʿl ḥyʾ dyrʾ dbrmryn [ ]
w ʿl ḥyʾ byth klh wmn [dy rḥym lh klh]

Translation: In the year 504 (= 193 AD) the portico [ ] the immovable altar of Barmaren [ ] the Elder from his own resources [ ] thirteen arches and the rafters in the wall [ ] for the life of king Abdsimia [ ] and for the life of the community of Barmaren [ ] and for the life of his entire house and whoever [is dear to him, all of them].

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implies that the name of the dedicator must have originally featured in the missing part of l.1.

However, elsewhere in Hatrene epigraphy (H62, H68 and H338), *pt(w)rʾ* definitely refers to an object. Teixidor (1980b: 64) derives it from Akkadian *paššuru*, “qui pourrait être à son tour un emprunt du sumérien avec le sens de *table d'offrandes* ou *autel*”. Degen (1978: 85) considers it to designate a table or altar too. In order to illustrate that *mhymnʾ* does not necessarily refer to persons, he cites a couple of Syriac examples in which it qualifies objects. Teixidor (1980b: 65) moreover assures that it is a *participium haphel* of the verb *ʾmn, to be firm*, describing the altar as immovable, fixed to a particular spot. In the approach taken by Degen and Teixidor there is no need to assume that the name of the dedicator originally featured in the missing part of l.1. Instead Degen (1978: 86) holds that following the portico, *ʾsṭwʾ*, a number of objects culminating in the *immovable altar* was enumerated which collectively constituted the object of dedication. Teixidor (1980b: 64) believes that in the missing part of l.1 the place of the portico is specified in relation to the *immovable altar of Barmaren*. However this may be, both Degen and Teixidor insert the name of the dedicator in the missing part of l.2, implying that *qšyšʾ*, *the Elder*, at the beginning of l.3 qualifies the dedicator himself and not, as Aggoula (1975: 191) assumed, his father.

[63] Aggoula (1975: 191), Degen (1978: 86) and Teixidor (1980b: 67) agree upon the meaning *mn byth dnpšh* (l.3)—litt. *from his very own house*—. They consider it to be a synonym of *mn kysh, at his own expense.* The phrase refers to the possessions of the dedicator's house or family. In his latest rendering of the text, however, Aggoula (1988: 205) seems to have abandoned this view. He translates l.3 as “le symposiarch de la même famille (de sa famille à lui)”. This suggests that on second thoughts he considers the phrase to reinforce the relationship between the dedicator, mentioned in the missing part of l.1, and his father, featuring in the missing part of l.2. Such a specification is entirely superfluous and should be discarded, especially as Aggoula's reconstruction of the contents of the missing parts of l.1 and l.2 is questionable.

[64] The interpretation of l.4 is, again, a major issue. Aggoula (1975: 191) renders it as “(il a construit aussi) 13 chambres et les adjointes à l'enceinte”. Degen (1978: 85) translates: “die 13 Bögen und die/das *ṭpʾ* in der Mauer”. Aggoula (1988: 205) partly adopts this interpretation. He renders it as “arcs (voûtes) 13 et un podium dans l'enceinte”. However, Teixidor (1980b: 66) correctly suggests that *kppʾ* refers to the arcade of the portico that apparently counted thirteen separate arches. His suggestion for interpreting *ṭpʾ* is most attractive too. Instead of deriving it from a verb meaning *to add* or a noun meaning *podium*, Teixidor (1980b: 66f) has it to denote the rafters supporting the roof. These rafters attached the arcade with the wall surrounding the main sanctuary.

As the missing part of each line is considerable, every restoration, except perhaps for the last line, is a mere guess. The name of the dedicator originally featured at the end of l.2, as suggested by Degen (1978: 85f) and Teixidor (1980b: 63ff). The qualification *the Elder*, *qšyšʾ* (l.3), then, refers to the dedicator who presents himself as a member of the city-council. The disparate categories of beneficiaries is very conspicuous. Firstly, the king is listed; secondly, some kind of religious organization; thirdly, perhaps, the dedicator himself; and finally his house and clients. As a civic dignitary, the dedicator first expresses his loyalty to the king with whom he may have had a personal, but certainly an administrative relationship.[65] Subsequently, he mentions the religious community of Barmaren as a beneficiary. H35, in which it likewise is listed, suggests that it is quite an extensive organization comprising members living permanently within the sanctuary of Barmaren and members who were employed in the temple-service but lived without.[66] Whilst the precise nature of the institution remains obscure, the ‘community of Barmaren’ may have been listed as a beneficiary simply because the dedicator belonged to it. Perhaps he officiated as a priest for a particular period of time and acted as a patron for the benefit of the ‘community’. On the other hand, he might have been dependent on the ‘community of Barmaren’ for some reason. Temples, particularly that of Barmaren, controlled large sums of money. Perhaps the dedicator had borrowed and was in the community’s debt. Irrespective of such circumstances, the ‘community of Barmaren’ is mentioned as a beneficiary before those that are related to the dedicator in terms of kinship or friendship, because it adds to the dedicator’s social status or because he owes it. In this respect, it resembles the dedicator’s relationship with the king. The continuation of the list of beneficiaries in l.7 suggests that the dedicator listed himself in the missing part of l.6 (Aggoula 1975: 193; Degen 1978: 88; Aggoula 1988: 205). It is possible that instead of himself or even in addition to himself, his sons and/or brothers were mentioned. This would correspond with the usual order of beneficiaries on the basis of kin. Finally, the members of the dedicator’s house are grouped with his clients. Whilst it was customary to mention brothers and sons separately, they may have been included in *his entire house*, *byth klh*.

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[65] Distinguishing personal and functional relationships in Antiquity is very difficult.

[66] Milik correctly observes that in H35, and thus in H290, *dyrʾ* can hardly refer to a building (Payne Smith 1903: 91). Although he maintains this definition in other instances (DFD: 369ff), Milik assures that here it denotes “‘la maisonnée’, donc les résidants et les desservants ‘de l’enceinte toute entière, intérieure et extérieure, (du temple) de Barmaren’ ” (DFD: 366).

Unlike the Nabataean examples, where the dedicator usually depends on the beneficiaries, and the Palmyrene examples, where a *vice versa* situation occurs, this Hatrene text incorporates both categories of beneficiaries. First the dedicator presents himself in social relationships which enhance his own social status. Then he presents himself in social relationships which derive their social status from him. With one and the same dedication he reinforces relations that ascend and that descend the social ladder. Moreover, it is significant that a divine recipient is not explicitly mentioned, despite the nature of the object of dedication, unless this occurred in the lacuna of 1.1.

H408 refers to another major object of dedication. It was found in an *iwan* in the south-eastern corner of the courtyard of shrine no. 13. This temple is located east of the main sanctuary (al-Salihi 1990: 27ff; Aggoula 1990b: 407). *Iwans* abound along the northern and southern sides and to a lesser extent along the western side of the courtyard (al-Salihi 1990: 30). The very complete and monumental inscription is engraved on a block of limestone measuring 90 × 30 cm. Some characters bear traces of red ink.

bḥzwrn d546 kptʾ dbnʾ ʿqʾ br[67]
brny br ʿqʾ br nbwktb prsdʾ tryhwn dylh dy[68]
kptʾ wʾšyth kwlhwn lgdʾ rbʾ drmgw ʿl ḥyyhy[69]
dʿqʾ wʿl ḥyʾ ʿbsʾ wgdyhb bnyhy w ʿl ḥyʾ
ʾḥyhy wmn drḥym lh w ʿl ḥyʾ rmgw kwlh
w ʿl ḥyʾ bny ddh kwlhwn dlhwʾ gnʾ bh hw wbnyhy[70]

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[67] Aggoula's (1990b: 408) interpretation of *kptʾ* as an *iwan* is plausible. He correctly observes that H413, a badly damaged inscription found in one of the rooms along the northern side of the courtyard, records the construction and dedication of another *kptʾ* by someone whose parentage differs from that of Oqe. Therefore, *kptʾ* is not a plural but a singular form.

[68] Aggoula's (1990b: 408) derivation of *prsdʾ* from Greek παραστάς may be tenable but his interpretation of the word is incorrect. It does not denote a *pilaster*, but a *colonnade*, or *portico*.

dylh: the Syriac particle *dyl* with suffix; it is used proleptically and refers to *kptʾ* (1.3).

[69] In Syriac the word *ʾšt* is known as *foundation* (Payne Smith 1903: 31). Aggoula (1990b: 409) observes that here it has to mean *wall*. However, another Syriac word precisely covers the context of the inscription, i.e. *ʾsʾ* (*status emphaticus*: *ʾstʾ*) *wall* or *party-wall* (Payne Smith 1903: 25). A change in sibilants may have occurred.

[70] Aggoula (1990b: 409) observes that the verb *gnʾ* means *to lie down, to recline* (Payne Smith 1903: 73).

> *wmštmšyn bh lʿlm brm ʾšytʾ mdnḥytʾ dkptʾ*[71]
> *dbnʾ zdwqʾ br ḥbbw ‘l ʾšytʾ mʿrbytʾ dkptʾ dbnʾ*
> *hw ‘qʾ mrmsʾ dkyr ‘qʾ sprʾ*[72]
>
> *Translation:* In Hazuran of 546 (= June 235 AD). The *iwan* that Oqe son of Barnai son of Oqe son of Nabuketab has built, viz. both colonnades of the *iwan* and all its walls for the Great Gad of Ramgu for the life of himself, Oqe, and for the life of Absa and Gadyahb, his sons, and for the life of his brothers and whoever is dear to him and for the life of all of Ramgu and for the life of all who belong to it, in order that he and his sons may recline in it and that they may be administered in it for ever. But the eastern wall of the *iwan* that Zadoqa son of Habibu has built (functions) as the western wall of the *iwan* that this Oqe, the publican, has built.[73] May Oqe, the scribe, be remembered.

The names in the genealogy of the dedicator are very rare in Hatra. At present, they do not feature in Hatrene onomastics, except for Oqe. The name 'Oqe' is found in memento-texts from shrine no. 12, the temple of Nabu.[74] Since the name 'Nabuketab' suggests a certain relationship with the god Nabu, it perhaps would have been more natural to have uncovered this inscription in shrine no. 12. The dedicator must have held a major office in the city's administration (I.9). As a member of the élites of both the city and of the tribe—whether of the 'Beni Ramgu' or another tribe—, he financed the building of an *iwan* along the courtyard of the temple of the Great Gad of Ramgu. The building of other *iwans* along the courtyard was financed by other prominent citizens (II.7–9).[75] As in Palmyra, private initiative was an important factor in the construction and embellishment of public buildings. Whilst they were the result of a joint effort, every individual was given credit for his contribution, thereby enhancing his prestige.

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[71] *mštmšyn*: *participium pluralis etpael* of *šmš*, *to be administered*, *to be served* (Payne Smith 1903: 585).

brm: is not a verb as Aggoula (1990b: 409) believes, but simply the conjunction 'but'. It is used in order to emphasize that the builder of the western wall is someone else than Oqe.

[72] *mr msʾ*: contrary to Aggoula (1990b: 410), it may denote a dignitary who is either in charge of the market, an ἀγορανόμος or a tax-collector, a *publicanus*. Aggoula correctly states that *mr* should be derived from Syriac *mr(ʾ)*, *master* (Payne Smith 1903: 298). *msʾ* is either the Syriac rendering of Greek μέσον or μέσα, *middle*—said of a city: *forum*, *agora*—(Payne Smith 1903: 283), or is to be derived from Jewish-Aramaic *msʾ*, *tax*.

[73] Apparently, the *iwan* of Oqe and the *iwan* of Zadoqa share a wall which Zadoqa has built.

[74] H391: *dkyr ‘qʾ lṭb*, *may Oqe be remembered for good*; H392: *dkyr lṭb ʾdy br ‘qʾ*, *may Addai son of Oqe be remembered for good.*

[75] The names in the genealogy of Zadoqa are likewise confined to this inscription (Abbadi 1983).

Prior to the excavation of shrine no. 13, the 'Great Gad of Ramgu' was unknown in Hatra. Yet, as a phenomenon, 'Gadde' are very prominent in Hatrene religion being usually connected with a particular person, family or spot (Hoftijzer 1968: 59f). As al-Salihi on several occasions has pointed out, in Hatra a 'Gad' is perceived as a male deity and iconographically represented as a manifestation of Hercules who, in turn, is associated with Nergal (al-Salihi 1971; 1973a; 1973b; 1982; 1990). Therefore, the discovery, in the cella of shrine no. 13, of a statue of Hercules was predictable (al-Salihi 1990: 30f).

The patron-deity of shrine no. 13 seems to have been connected with a particular group of people known under the name 'Ramgu'.[76] This is implied by the wording of ll.5–6. al-Salihi (1990: 32) believes that he has identified the eponymous ancestor in H414. This text, inscribed on a relief representing a number of persons that was also found in shrine no. 13, attributes the name 'Shamashaqab son of Ramgu' to one of these persons. Thus al-Salihi concludes that he is the son of the "man responsible for building the shrine and dedicating it to the worship of GND'". Subsequently, the Gad in question became known as that of Ramgu. However, if Ramgu is the illustrious ancestor who lent his name to this particular Gad and this group of people, then it would only be natural for later generations to immortalize him by naming children after him. It is more likely that in H414 the occurrence of the name 'Ramgu' marks a particular tribal group. Consequently, al-Salihi's conclusion is prone to doubt for it is by no means obvious that the 'Ramgu' mentioned in H414 is to be identified with the illustrious ancestor.

The first part of the list of beneficiaries mentions the usual categories that are related to the dedicator in terms of kinship or friendship. Yet, it is unique that a particular tribe and its members are listed without being related to the dedicator in terms of kinship. Although Oqe's reasons can only be surmised, two alternatives may be proposed. If Oqe himself belongs to the 'Beni Ramgu', then he asserts his status as a member of the tribal élite. Perhaps he even presents himself as the prime leader of the tribe.[77] If, the designation *his sons*,

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[76] If only tentatively, they have been designated as 'Beni Ramgu' above.

[77] Cf. for the implications of the length of the dedicator's genealogy the comments on H107 above and Dijkstra (1990: 90f).

bnyhy, at the end of l.6 is interpreted as a classificatory concept rather than a descriptive one, then all beneficiaries including distant relatives are invited to use the *iwan* for religious gatherings. However, this would deprive other prominent members of the tribe of an opportunity to spend their money on similar building-activities in the temple, unless they wish to challenge Oqe's leadership. It is more probable that *his sons* (l.6) is a descriptive concept confining the users of the *iwan* to Oqe and his direct offspring. Other prominent families of the tribe are supposed to build their own accomodation. Thus, the beneficiaries of the dedication should be strictly separated from the contemplated users of the *iwan*.

On the other hand, it is possible that Oqe did not belong to 'Beni Ramgu' and on account of that listed them as beneficiaries. In that case, his building-activities are a kind of propaganda by which he creates a permanent basis among the 'Beni Ramgu', the use of which being reserved for himself and his immediate offspring. Simultaneously, he commits the 'Beni Ramgu' to him by contributing to the temple of their Great Gad as well as by listing them among the beneficiaries.[78]

Major dedications as products of a joint effort

In Hatra, the building and dedication of temples was not entirely the preoccupation of prosperous private persons (H214; H272) or institutions (H107). Private persons of lesser wealth may partake by spending a sum of money on a particular project. In Palmyra such a private person would probably confine himself to a dedication he could afford, perhaps even making an anonymous contribution to a project initiated by a relative. He would take it for granted that he was not mentioned as a co-financier but instead was listed among the beneficiaries. In Hatra the participation of such a person in large projects seems to have been institutionalized. In exchange for spending a certain sum he was granted the privilege to attach an inscription commemorating his noble gesture to the building concerned. Interestingly, these inscriptions are very similar to those crediting a single person with a large project and the formula *ʿl ḥyy* is a constituent part. Frequently, a divine recipient is absent, although in a couple of instances this may be due to the text's state of preservation. Perhaps it was felt to be obvious that in a text inscribed on a wall of the temple of Shamash, that Shamash would act as a divine recipient.

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[78] Presumably, the formula *ʿl ḥyy* featured also in the longest text of H413, which consists of three separate texts accompanying a relief. It was found in one of the *iwans* along the northern side of the courtyard of shrine no. 13 (Aggoula 1990b: 415). Probably, it represents the dedicator, stretching his hand towards heaven and holding in his left hand a purse, together with the Great Gad of Ramgu. Unfortunately, the inscription is so badly damaged that it is hardly legible. The first line is identical to that of H408 and in another line the 'Great Gad of Ramgu' can be read. On account of this al-Salihi (1990: 33f) suspects that the text was deliberately mutilated. Some remaining characters suggest that H413c originally was a dedicatory inscription containing the formula *ʿl ḥyy* (Aggoula 1990b: 417).

Of the seven texts concerned, two (H191, H192) were found on a wall of the great southern *iwan* of the main sanctuary's central temple-complex. The other five (H241, H242, H243, H244, H245) are engraved on the southern wall of the great northern *iwan* of the same building.[79] The names featuring in H191 and H192 suggest that the dedicators were related to each other and may in fact have been brothers. Similarly, the respective dedicators of H242, H243 and H244 must have been related to each other as well.[80] Apparently, the contributions of different families, or the inscriptions commemorating them, were concentrated in a particular part of the building arising from their joint effort.[81] The texts of these seven inscriptions are:

H191[82]
[y]hb mʿyrw br [ḥ]nšmš lbnynʾ [dy]

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[79] Vattioni (1981: 71) attributes H191 to a statue found in a room adjoining the great southern *iwan*. Caquot (1964: 267) has it inscribed on a wall. Instead Caquot attributes H193 to the room which Vattioni indicates for H191. Caquot (1964: 268) does not explicitly mention the provenance of H192, but suggests that it belongs to the same wall as H191. Cf. also Vattioni (1981: 71).

[80] On account of H107, the dedicator of H245 belongs to the 'Beni Kabiru', a sub-tribe of the Beni Raphshamash. Unless the 'Beni Asil' is also a sub-tribe of the Beni Raphshamash, there is no relationship between the dedicators of H242, H243 and H244 and that of H245. Even if both are sub-tribes of the Beni Raphshamash, then still the relationship between their respective members is only very distant.

[81] From a psychological perspective such joint ventures rallying members of different families and having each of them achieve a common goal, would have strengthened the collective spirit of the city's inhabitants. They were a useful means in creating an overall corporate body civic exceeding existing ties of kinship.

[82] The drawing reproduced by Safar (1962: 54) is quite enigmatic at particular points. As it does not allow for a coherent reading, its accuracy may be queried. Aggoula's (1972: 41) restorations are more plausible, although the reading of l.3 still is problematic. As the inscription is couched in the third person singular, *brh*, *his son*, is expected instead of *bry*, *my son*. It is possible, though, that *bry* is a personal name. So far it is not attested in Hatra, but its cognate *brʾ* is (Abbadi 1983: 8f). In Palmyra *bry* appears once as a personal name (Stark 1971: 11).

[s]gyl mnn I[I] w'ˀs V ˁl ḥyˀ
bry w[ ]

Translation: Moairu son of Hanshamash has given two *mines* and five *as* for the building of the SGYL for the life of Barai and [ ].

H192[83]
yhb krsˀ br [ḥ]nšmš
lbnynˀ dy [sgy]l ˀs XIII
ˁl ḥyyhy wˁl ḥyˀ ḥnšmš br[h]
wˀḥyhy

Translation: Karsa son of Hanshamash has given thirteen *as* for the building of the SGYL for the life of himself and the life of Hanshamash, his son, and his brothers.[84]

H241[85]
mnyn XXXIII ˁl ḥyˀ
ˀḥyhy wbnyhy

Translation: thirty-three *mines* for the life of his brothers and his sons.

H242[86]
yhb ˀšlm wkš[ṭw]
bny yhybw wyhybw br qr/dˀm ˀḥwh[y]
[m]n ˁṣylyˀ LIV ˀstr[ˀ]
[ˁl ḥy]y ˀš[lm]

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[83] The reading is confirmed by the drawings of Safar (1962: 55) and Ibrahim (1986: 512).

[84] The suffix of *ˀḥyhy* (l.4) may refer to Karsa or to Hanshamash. If the latter applies, then Karsa has singled out one of his sons, probably the eldest, as being mentioned separately. The usual sequence of beneficiaries first lists the dedicator's sons and then his brothers. This order is observed here too, if the dedicator had but one son. In that case the suffix of *ˀḥyhy* refers to Karsa.

[85] Cf. Ibrahim (1986: 519), Aggoula (1972: 14), Degen (1973–74: 409). Since the name of the dedicator is missing and therefore the point of reference of the suffixes, this inscription is, by reversity, incomplete.

[86] The reading arises from Ibrahim's (1986: 519) drawing and the comments and resorations of Aggoula (1972: 14) and Degen (1973–74: 410). The reading of the last line is mere conjecture. The drawing suggests that in l.2 a character was added afterwards between "r/d" and "m" of qr/d'm. It resembles most a "ˀ". The name, however, is unknown in Hatra but it could be of Iranian origin. The suffix of *ˀḥwh[y]* (l.2) refers to Yahibu

Translation: Ashlam and Kashtu sons of Yahibu and Yahibu son of QR/DʾM, his brother, who belong to the Asil, have given fifty-four *stater* [for the life] of Ash[lam].

H243[87]

[byr]ḥ knwn d428 ʾyty ʾšlm br yhybw ʿṣylyʾ
mnyn III [wʾs]ʾ XV ʿl ḥyyhy wḥyʾ šmšbrk br ʾyzlʾ mrh

Translation: In the month Kanun of 428 (= December 117 AD) has given Ashlam son of Yahibu, who belongs to the Asil, three *mines* and fifteen *as* for the life of himself and the life of Shamshbarek son of Aizela, his patron.

H244[88]

[4]11 ʾyty yh[y]bw ʿṣylyʾ
mnyn X lʿbdʾ dy sgyl ʿl ḥyyhy

Translation: [4]11 (= 100 AD) has given Yahibu, who belongs to the Asil, ten *mines* for the work of the SGYL for the life of himself

H245[89]

[ ] ʾyty ʾbygd br kbyrw b[r] ʾbygd
ʾs VIII mn prtʾ ḥdʾ dy ʾḥrym lʿbdʾ dy sgyl ʿl
ḥyyhy wʿl ḥyʾ bnyhy

---

son of *qr/dʾm*. He is a full cousin of Ashlam and Kashtu (l.1). He may have been named after his uncle, the father of his co-dedicators. As Ashlam reappears as a dedicator in H243, dated to 117 AD, H242 could also be similarly dated. Although the designation *mn ʿṣylyʾ* might refer to Yahibu son of *qr/dʾm* only—in that case H242 presents a relationship between two different tribal groups—, H243 leaves no doubt that it refers to Ashlam and Kashtu as well.

[87] Ibrahim (1986: 519) presents a drawing. The text is commented upon by Aggoula (1972: 15) and Degen (1973–74: 410).

[88] Ibrahim (1986: 520) presents a drawing. The text is commented upon by Aggoula (1972: 15) and Degen (1973–74: 411). Aggoula's suggestion for the reading of the date is plausible because it agrees with the supposition that Yahibu is the father of Ashlam, the dedicator of H242 and H243.

[89] Ibrahim's (1986: 520) drawing suggests that at the beginning of l.1 the date is missing, as has also been observed by Degen (1973–74: 412). If Ibrahim's drawing is accurate, Degen's suggestion for reading *hdʾ* instead of *ḥdʾ* should be discarded. The drawing also assures the reading *prtʾ* (l.2), although a satisfying interpretation is still lacking. Aggoula (1972: 15f) renders it as "brebis" (Payne Smith 1903: 456). The dedication of a sheep for the *work of the SGYL* seems a little strange, unless *ʿbdʾ* denotes a particular component of the temple service. In view of its context elsewhere, this would seem to be unlikely. Degen (1973–74: 412) links it with Talmudic *pwrtʾ* meaning *portion*. Perhaps Abigad

> *Translation:* [ ] has given Abigad son of Kabiru son of Abigad eight *as* from one portion which he had dedicated to the work of the SGYL for the life of himself and the life of his sons.

In the majority of these inscriptions the relationship between dedicator(s) and beneficiaries is couched in terms of kinship. As in Palmyra, sons and brothers are very prominent beneficiaries. The dedicator presents himself in his most important vertical and horizontal relations of kinship, which he intends to reinforce (H192, H241, H245 and perhaps H191, H242 and H244) by directing divine favours and the concomitant public esteem which he expects to gain from his dedication towards them.[90] The dedications bear some resemblance to the small altars dedicated to the 'Anonymous God' in Palmyra, although notably a divine recipient is absent.

In H243 the only beneficiary apart from the dedicator is described as *his patron*, *mrh*. Yet in H272 the patron-client bond between dedicator and beneficiaries is probably additional to the relation of kinship. However, there is no indication whatsoever that this is the case in H243. The names of the dedicator and the beneficiary as well as their parentage bear no resemblance at all, perhaps intimating a genuine patron-client bond. Since the client had the means for offering

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agreed to provide several fixed sums of money. In that case H245 records the payment of a part of one such fixed sum.

Another problem is the relationship between the dedicator of H245 and that of H107. Degen and Aggoula simply assume that the genealogy of the dedicator of H107 is extended by one generation. This suggests that the dedicator of H245 is the great-grandfather of that of H107. However, the date of H245 could not have been too different from that of H243 (117 AD) and 244 (100 AD). The inscriptions come from the same wall. The date of H107 on the other hand did probably not differ too much from that of H272 (138 AD) with the gap in time between the respective dedications being probably about 25 years. This does not correspond with the gap in time between the active years of a great-grandfather and his great-grandson, which is estimated to be approximately 60 years. Unless the dedicator of H245 was very old at the time of his dedication and that of H107 very very young, there can be no direct relationship between them. The dedicators of H107 and H245 may each have belonged to a different branch of the same clan. On account of papponymy, the great-grandfather of the dedicator of H107 may have had a son by the name of Kabiru. This Kabiru, then, is a brother of Gaddai, his grandfather. Consequently, Abigad, the dedicator of H245, is a cousin of Abigad, the father of the dedicator of H107. In that case the gap in time between the dates of the respective dedications and between the active years of their dedicators would more or less coincide. Cf. Appendix H.

[90] H244 only mentions the dedicator as a beneficiary. H191 and H242 seem to indicate the beneficiary by name. Due to the state of preservation of these inscriptions, the list of beneficiaries of the former may be incomplete. Those listed in the latter may have been related to the dedicator in terms of kinship after their names had been mentioned.

a certain sum, his economic dependence must have been only minor, nevertheless his social or political dependence may have been considerable. Perhaps he was a foreigner who enjoyed the protection of Shamshbarek son of Aizela. Of course in publicly presenting this bond and in directing the divine favours and the public prestige towards his patron, the client expresses his appreciation and intends to reinforce their bond.

Minor objects of dedication

Although it is inscribed on the drum of a column, H338 refers to the dedication of an altar. It was found not in the city proper, but about 7.5 km east of it. At this spot, now called al-Maimun, there is a spring which flows into Wadi Tharthar (Aggoula 1981: 368). The spot probably acquired religious significance given the importance of water for sustaining life in the desert. The inscription is well preserved.

> *byrḥ ʾdr šnt 444 ptwrʾ dy ʿbd ʿbdʾlhʾ*[91]
> *br ṭpsrʾ br nṣrw lsmyʾ dy mrtn ʿl ḥyʾ*
> *nšryhb mryʾ wʿl ḥyʾ nṣrw brh qšyšʾ*
>
> *Translation:* In the month Adar of the year 444 (= March 133 AD). The altar that Abdallah son of Tapsarra son of Nasru has made for the Standards of Marten for the life of Neshryahb, the lord, and for the life of Nasru, his son, the Elder.

Both dedicator and beneficiaries are known from H272.[92] It is noteworthy that Nasru is described here as *the Elder*, *qšyšʾ*, whereas in H272 he is allotted the title 'lord', *mryʾ*. The inscription cited by Aggoula (1989: 310) simultaneously qualifies Nasru as 'lord', *mryʾ*, and 'Elder', *qšyšʾ*, in addition to two other functions.[93] The Standards of Our Lady function as a divine recipient.

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[91] *ptwrʾ*: cf. the comments upon H290 above.

[92] Cf. for a reconstruction of familial relationships the comments upon H272 above.

[93] The first line of this inscription is: *[ ] nṣrw mryʾ ʾbyʾ rbʾ ʾpklʾ dy šmš ʾlhʾ qšyšʾ*, [ ] *Nasru, the lord, the patrician, the priest of the god Shamash, the Elder*. Aggoula's (1989: 311) contention that *qšyšʾ* refers to Shamash is incorrect. Nevertheless, his suggestion that the word *qššʾ* in l.4 of H232b, which is hard to interpret, qualifies the god Barmaren (l.3) may be correct. It is difficult to distinguish, though, whether *qššʾ* is *qšyšʾ* defectively spelled.

In H62 the object of dedication is also an altar. It is engraved on a table of limestone measuring 133 × 90cm found in four pieces in the vicinity of an altar in shrine no. 9.[94]

byrḥ mrḥšwn šnt 476 bnʾ ptrʾ wmqmʾ[95]
ʿbdmlyk br yhybʾ wʿqybšmš brh ʿl ḥyhn
wḥyʾ bnyhn

Translation: In the month Marheshwan of the year 476 (= November 164 AD) have built Abdmalik son of Yahiba and Aqibshamash, his son, the altar and the platform for the life of themselves and the life of their sons.

No divine recipient is explicitly mentioned. As the archaeological conditions suggest that the object of dedication served a religious purpose, it nevertheless may be assumed. Genealogically, each of the dedicators are specified by only one generation. The name Yahiba also occurs in H65, which was found in the same shrine. Perhaps, Abdsimia son of Yahiba (H65) and Abdmalik son of Yahiba (H62) were brothers. Abdmalik and his son Aqibshamash present themselves as generous benefactors of shrine no. 9, not only by the dedication of the altar and its support, but also from their listing of themselves and their sons as the sole beneficiaries. The concluding phrase highlights the fact that, strictly speaking, Aqibshamash is listed twice as a beneficiary.

A mutilated inscription from shrine no. 10 mentions another altar as an object of dedication. It is engraved on a table of limestone of which the left-hand side is missing.

H68
ptwrʾ dy ʿbd [ ]
br ḥnynʾ ʿl ḥy[yhy]
wʿl ḥyʾ bnyhy w[ ]

Translation: The altar which [ ] son of Hanina has made for the life of himself and the life of his sons and [ ].

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[94] Caquot (1955c: 264) presents three lines. The drawing of Ibrahim (1986: 500) only has the first two.

[95] *mqmʾ*: *status determinatus* of *mqm*, *(standing-)place*, refers to the platform supporting the altar, as correctly observed by Aggoula (1988: 198). It is neither a *dish* (Caquot 1955c: 265) nor a *stele* (Vattioni 1981: 45).

Although it is impossible to estimate the quantity of each line that is missing, the remaining text suggests that it may not be too much. At the end of l.1 the name of the dedicator should be assumed. When l.2 and l.3 are respectively supplemented with *[yhy]*, *of himself*, and *[ʿḥyhy]*, *his brothers*, all the characteristics of a complete *ʿl ḥyy*-inscription are present. The patronym of the dedicator, Hanina, is rare in Hatrene onomastics (Abbadi 1983: 20). Apart from this example, it only occurs in H259—*dwktʾ dḥnynʾ*—, in H389 and in H403. The latter, found in the temple of Nabu, reports that *Shamashyahb son of Hanina* is its architect. H389, also from the temple of Nabu, incites the reader to *remember for good Dara* (or: *Dada*) *and his father Hanina*. The rarity of the name Hanina, suggests that the dedicators of H68, H389 and H403 were brothers, the offspring of Hanina (H259). Again, a divine recipient is absent in H68.

The interpretation of H288c is very complicated. Together with H288a and 288b it is inscribed on an altar, of which three sides each bear a badly weathered inscription. The fourth shows a relief of a man standing in an open door. The altar was found in a pseudo-amphitheatre near the separation-wall between the central temple-complex and temple A of the main sanctuary (Degen 1978: 79). H288a explicitly deals with the dedication of the altar. It is dated to 460 Seleucid Era (= 149 AD). It is only natural to extend this as the date also for H288b and H288c. H288a commences with the personal pronoun *I*, *ʾnʾ*, which suggests that the entire text is posed in the first person singular, because it is confirmed by the verbal form in H288c (l.2).

[ ]
ʾqymyt
ṣlmy ʿl
ḥyʾ mʿnw
mryʾ wʿl
ḥy brzl wbrʾ
bnyhy[96]

Translation: [ ] I have erected my image for the life of lord Maanu and for the life of Barzel and Bara, his sons.

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[96] Ibrahim's (1986: 523) drawing clearly has *bnyhy*, *his sons*, instead of *bny*, *my sons*, suggested by Aggoula (1975: 389) and Degen (1978: 80).

The first problem that is encountered is the reference to an image or statue as an object of dedication. Secondly, that the image represents the dedicator, who is identified as *Barnabu son of Neshri son of Aba* (H288a) is enigmatic. Nevertheless, its dedication aims to please lord Maanu and his sons. Awkward as it may initially seem, the dedication is conceivable if the image in question is that which has been carved on the fourth side of the altar. The representation may reproduce the fact that the dedicator financially contributed to the construction in which the altar was found. To substantiate this, he dedicated an altar to the 'Gad' of the place (H288a) and had his contribution materially commemorated by having himself represented in front of the construction which he financed. The image may, in fact, replace the building-inscription. The dedicator describes his contribution, and thus the object of dedication, though, as *my image*. Socially, the beneficiaries are probably of a higher rank than he.

Aside from altars, the statue of a deity and a cult-relief each occur at least once as an object of dedication. H4 is inscribed on the back of a statue representing a female deity. It was found in a small temple facing the southern wall of the main sanctuary (Caquot 1952: 89ff).

glp nny
gdy
h[b]
br zrqʾ
ʿl ḥyʾ
nšryhb
brh
dkyr
[lṭ]b

Translation: Gadyahb son of Zorqa has sculpted Nanai for the life of Neshryahb his son. May it (or: he) be remembered for good.[97]

Although she is not explicitly mentioned as such, the divine recipient is probably Nanai who is represented by the statue. The conception of the text is similar to that of the dedications to the 'Anonymous God' in Palmyra. Such is the ambivalent nature of votive-offerings, the execution and dedication of the statue either aims to ensure the future well-being of Neshryahb, or it represents the redemption of a vow (Drijvers 1982a: 182f). If Gadyahb is the subject of *dkyr lṭb*, then he expresses his hopes for benefitting from the dedication as well. Yet, if this were the case, it is perplexing that his name is not explicitly repeated as the subject of the phrase. If the act of dedicating is the subject, then the phrase either reinforces the formula *ʿl ḥyy* or it denotes the dedication as the redemption of a vow. The names of both dedicator and beneficiary are common in Hatrene onomastics (Abbadi 1983: 12 and 29f). Gadyahb's patronym, however, is restricted to this one occasion (Abbadi 1983: 18) making it impossible to define the social context of the family.

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[97] Gadyahb is the subject and Nanai the object (Aggoula 1969: 87).

H31 is engraved on the socle of a relief representing a deity. It was found in shrine no. 5 (Caquot 1953: 237).

> *glpt mrtbw*
> *ʿl ḥyh wʿl*
> *rbtʾ mrh*[98]
> *wʿl mn ddḥlh*[99]

> *Translation:* Martabu has sculpted for the life of herself and for Rabta, her superior, and for whoever worships her (= the goddess).

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[98] Probably inspired by H35, Milik (DFD: 365f) reads *rbt ʾmrh*, "'sa dame de la promesse', qui à la suite d'un voeu de la femme Martabu lui accorda ce qu'elle désirait; le bas-relief est l'ex-voto de Martabu". Thus he translates H31 as: "Martabu a fait sculpter (ce relief) pour son salut et en l'honneur de sa Dame de promesse et de quiconque la vénère" (DFD: 366). Although the formula *ʿl ḥyy* is not repeated after *wʿl* (l.2), it must be understood—the translation "en l'honneur de" indeed makes sense, but finds no epigraphical support—. If Milik is correct, then the deity acts as a beneficiary, which is most unusual. Instead, Safar (1953a: 17) and Caquot (1953: 238), recently followed by Aggoula (1988: 214), read *rbtʾ mrh*, *Rabta her master*. Safar adds: "he seems to be the chief priest of Martabu". Aggoula (1975: 197) suggested yet a third interpretation, i.e. to conceive of *rbtʾ* as *rbytʾ* defectively spelled. If so, then l.3 should be translated as: *the major-domo, her master*. In that case it is odd that the beneficiary is indicated only by his function and his relationship to Martabu and not by his name.

[99] A problem arises over the object of the suffix of *dḥlh*. Safar (1953a: 17), Caquot (1953: 238) and Aggoula (1988: 214) suggest that it refers to Rabta (l.3), although Safar notes that it may also refer to Martabu. They differ, however, in their interpretation of the verb *dḥl*, *to worship, to venerate* (Payne Smith 1903: 88f). The verb is particularly pertinent if its object is a deity. It would be paradoxical, then, if the suffix refers to Rabta, who can hardly have been the object of a divine cult. Caquot nevertheless translates l.4 as "pour quiconque le vénère" and Safar "whoever respects him". They both make an attempt to preserve the solemnity of the act of worship. Aggoula, on the other hand, renders the verb as *to serve*, the object of which may be divine or human. He translates l.4 as "et pour celui qui le sert". The male article in French indicates that both Caquot

The divine name *ʾšrbl* occurs frequently in inscriptions from shrine no. 5. Hence, when an almost intact—only the head is missing—statue of a male deity (al-Asil 1954), that in many respects resembles the statue of Apollo which Macrobius described (Pirenne 1959: 294 and 297; du Mesnil du Buisson 1962: 149f) was found in it, it was assumed that the divine name *ʾšrbl* identified the deity represented by the statue (al-Salihi 1970: 187).[100] However, the identification with Ashurbel is based on circumstantial evidence only and is not otherwise substantiated. As Milik (DFD: 338) has observed when commenting upon H35, the divine name has no relation whatsoever with the statue, but should be read as Isharbel, a female deity.[101]

H34, likewise found in shrine no. 5, describes Martabu as the *priestess of Isharbel, kmrt [ʾ]š[r]bl.* Since H31 suggests that she was supervised by a male priest, the temple-service of Isharbel appears not to have been restricted to women as Milik believes (DFD: 373). Whether it was a comparable organization with that of the Vestal Virgins in Rome is questionable (DFD: 373; Drijvers 1977: 835). Since Martabu was a priestess as well as being in a position to dedicate a cult-relief, she is marked as a distinguished woman whose status was enhanced by the frequenting of the shrine by female members of the royal family. Two inscriptions from the shrine record the erection of statues of princesses (Drijvers 1977: 835). H36 mentions the erection of a statue of *Dushfari daughter of king Sanatruq (II)* and H37 that of a statue of Simia, his granddaughter.

H31 suggests that the dedication of Martabu was merely functional. Besides herself; her superior and *whoever worships* the goddess are listed as beneficiaries. Apparently, she intended to reinforce her relationship both with her superior on whom she may have depended, in order to strengthen her position as a priestess, and with the worshippers of the goddess, who in a way depended on her. As a

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and Aggoula perceive Rabta as the object of the suffix of *dḥlh*. However, since the object of the verb is usually divine, Milik's (DFD: 366) suggestion that it relates instead to Isharbel, the patron-deity of shrine no. 5, may be correct, although it is based on a false conception of l.3. This is reinforced if the deity represented on the relief in fact is Isharbel. Another explanation is that l.4 reads the phrase *mn drḥ(m) lh, whoever is dear to him/her*. All but one of the characters of the verb are present. However, this alternate suggestion should be verified from the photograph of the inscription.

[100] Cf. Macrobius, *Saturnalia* I, 17, 66ff.

[101] H35 presents *ʾšrbl* in l.4 as the subject of *ʾmrt*, she said, promised. In the same line the deity is described as *btlh*, the Virgin (DFD: 344). Therefore, the deity must be female. Milik explains the name as "Joie de Bel" (DFD: 344). Rejecting this, Lipinski (1982: 124) is convinced that it is derived from the name Ištar whose veneration in Mesopotamia extends back many centuries before the rise of Hatra.

priestess she acted as an intermediary between deity and worshippers. Her self-representation would be pertinent, particularly if the relief was dedicated on the occasion of Martabu assuming the dignity of a priestess.[102]

Statues as objects of dedication

The *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions in Hatra are distinguished by a particular category that mentions statues representing human beings as the objects of dedication. All of these inscriptions are attached to the statue's base and/or socle and were found in temple-precincts. It might be possible to attribute to them a religious nature but doubts are raised by the subject-matter which does not manifest any cultic overtones in its iconography. Moreover, a divine recipient is structurally absent. Therefore, it must be proposed that the semantic value of the formula in these *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions differs from the way in which it is usually employed. Indeed, the religious dimension appears to have been dispensed with completely. As a result the formula should not be explained as the evocation of a divine recipient for the bestowal of 'life' on one or more beneficiaries. The idea may waver at the back of the dedicator's mind, but it is not explicitly expressed. Instead, dedicators and beneficiaries are simply presented in their social relationship, creating serious problems about the exact nature of the dedication.

In the majority of inscriptions belonging to this category the beneficiaries are of higher social rank than the dedicators. Drijvers' (1982a: 184) suggestion that the meaning of the formula *for the life of* approximates that of the formula *in honour of*, *lyqr*, may be correct in this context. In Palmyra the latter is abundantly employed by clients erecting statues representing their patrons. They bear no explicit religious dimension apart from the fact that their find-spots are often in the porticoes of temples and along the 'Great' and 'Transversal' Colonnades.[103] The interpretation of these Hatrene inscriptions is very complicated and closely linked with a careful reading. Therefore, it is worth citing them at length.

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[102] The remains of H32, found in shrine no. 5 and engraved on the socle of a relief, likewise yield the formula *ʿl ḥyy*. However, as it is defined more by lacunae than by text, it is hard to interpret and, consequently comment has not been passed. Cf. Safar (1953a: 17), Caquot (1953: 238), Vattioni (1981: 36).

[103] Cf. p. 155.

H405 is engraved on the base (1.1) and the socle of a statue found in the cella of shrine no. 12, the temple of Nabu.

> *ṣlmʾ dy šmšʿqb*[104]
> *kmrʾ br ʾdy dy*
> *ʾqym lh ʿqbšmʾ*
> *br ʾḥth ʿl ḥyhy*
> *wʿl ḥyʾ bnyhy dy*
> *kmrʾ wʿl ḥyʾ mn*
> *dy rḥm lh klh*
> *bʾdr d516*
>
> *Translation:* The statue of Shamashaqab, the priest, son of Addai, which has erected for him Aqabshama, the son of his sister, for the life of him and for the life of his sons, viz. of the priest, and for the life of whoever is dear to him, all of them. In Adar of 516 (= March 205 AD).[105]

A nephew erects a statue of his uncle.[106] As in H272, it is possible that Shamashaqab acted as a patron of Aqabshama who probably erected the statue to express his appreciation for benefits which were bestowed. Excepting 1.5, a problem surrounds how the suffixes relate to the beneficiaries. Do they refer to Shamashaqab or Aqabshama? If they refer to Aqabshama, then the explicit qualification of *bnyhy* (1.5) as *dy kmrʾ* is comprehendable. It distinguishes between the point of reference of the suffix of *ḥyhy* (1.4) and that of *bnyhy* (1.5). If Shamashaqab is Aqabshama's uncle and patron, then the meaning of the formula in 1.4 almost equals *for the benefit of*, although the dedication of a priest's statue may evoke religious connotations. The act of dedication, then, expresses Aqabshama's hopes to continue his bond with Shamashaqab. Simultaneously, he commits his own clients in suggesting that it is to their benefit as well (11.6–7). Including his cousins, the priest's sons, as beneficiaries is merely an act of courtesy.

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[104] al-Salihi (1983: 143) and Aggoula (1985: 283) read *nbwgbr* instead of *šmšʿqb*. The photograph of al-Salihi (1983: pl.XIX) does confirm this reading. However, the photograph and drawing of Abdulla (1984: 117f) as well as those of Ibrahim (1986: 475) definitely have *šmšʿqb*. Now, the first line of the text is engraved on the base of the statue. A close examination of the photographs suggests that on al-Salihi's photograph of 1983, which provides the basis of Aggoula's comments, the statue carried by the socle is different from that on Abdulla's photograph of 1984. Apparently, two statues, each having one line inscribed on the base, were found near the socle. At first the excavators put the wrong statue on it. On Abdulla's photograph the script on the base corresponds with that on the socle as do the dimensions of the statue's base. This is not the case in the photograph of al-Salihi. On this basis, therefore, the reading of 1.1 is proposed as: *ṣlmʾ dy šmšʿqb*. Abdulla (1984: 115) lists al-Salihi's 1.1 as H402.

[105] Aggoula (1985: 284) renders 11.7–8 as "tous ceux qui l'aiment". He defines *rḥm* as the 3rd person singular perfect of *rḥm* with the preposition *l* indicating the object of the verb. Admittedly, the phrase usually has *rḥym*. However, the verbal form may have been spelt defectively. Moreover, if *rḥym* is a *participium passivum* perfect, the use of the preposition *l* is more fitting than in Aggoula's proposal where the suffix would be connected directly to the verb.

[106] Bremmer and Horsfall (1987b: 53ff) observe that in many traditional societies, the mother's brother has an educational task towards her son.

Another option is that the suffix of 1.4 refers to Aqabshama, but that the others refer to Shamashaqab. The interpretation of 1.4, then, remains the same, whereas that of 11.6–7 must be reconsidered. The act of courtesy involves both the priest's sons as well as others who, like Aqabshama, depend on him. The best conception of 11.6–7 then is that Aqabshama in his presentation of Shamashaqab assumes that the latter does not only act towards him as a patron, but towards all who depend on him. On the other hand, the meaning of the phrase *whoever is dear to him* may largely depend on the context in which it occurs. Next to it only the honoured person's sons are mentioned in H405. Thus its meaning may approximate *relatives, those who have a social relationship with*. If the list of beneficiaries is increasingly differentiated, its meaning may be more restricted, i.e. *those who have a social relationship with, but who do not belong to a category already mentioned*. In a society where patronage prevailed, every social relationship of a dignitary of high social rank will be unequal, even if his own sons or brothers are concerned. Therefore, the phrase always refers to people that are socially and/or economically dependent.

A third option is that the suffixes in 11.4–7 all refer to the honourable Shamashaqab. In that case the qualification *dy kmrʾ* (11.5–6) is superfluous in the proposed reading. Aqabshama erected the statue of his uncle *for the life of* his uncle, his uncle's sons and whoever is further related to his uncle.

H140 is engraved on the socle of a statue found in the central temple-complex of the main sanctuary. Unfortunately, the statue and with it the first line of the inscription is missing.

[ ][107]
mrʾ kpyʾ b[r]

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[107] Vattioni (1981: 62) restores: *ṣlmʾ dy [ ]*. Ibrahim's (1986: 509) drawing confirms the given reading, suggesting that Milik's (DFD: 363) reading of *mryʾ*, *the lord*, in 1.3 should be discarded.

> *wlgš mrʾ d[y]*
> *ʾqym lh ʾbʾ*
> *rb dḥšyhy*
> *ʿl ḥyyhy*
>
> *Translation:* [ ] master of the arches, son of Vologash, the patron, which has erected for him Aba, the chief of his guards, for the life of him.

Because of the lacuna, the person represented by the statue is only known by his title: *master of the arches*. Milik (DFD: 179) suggests that it probably denotes a religious office where the person who held it was entrusted with the supervision of the various *iwans*. He is also described as son of a certain Vologash, who is explicitly qualified as a patron. Milik (DFD: 363) claims that the Vologash mentioned here is lord Vologash. The dedicator qualifies himself as *the chief of his guards*.[108]

Again a problem over whom the suffixes of ll.5–6 refer. The suffix of l.5 either refers to *the master of the arches*, who was assisted by a body of guards, or it refers to his father Vologash, who as a powerful patron kept his own bodyguard. If so, then the suffix of l.6 may also refer to Vologash. In that case Aba honoured his patron by erecting a statue of his son and subsequently made his patron a beneficiary of the dedication. It is also possible that the suffix in l.5 refers to Vologash and that the suffix in l.6 refers to Aba. In that case the dedicator reinforces the bond with his patron by erecting a statue of his son and subsequently expresses his hope that their bond may continue. Another possibility is that both suffixes refer to *the master of the arches*. As his assistant Aba erects a statue of him *for the life* of him. If so, then the qualification of l.3 is only meant to enhance the beneficary's status as the son of a well-known patron.

H80 is engraved on the base (ll.1–2) and the socle of a statue found in shrine no. 11. Ibrahim's (1986: 506) drawing assures the following text.[109]

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[108] *dḥšyhy*: cf. Caquot (1964: 259). Segal's (1986: 59) suggestion that the king's guards are meant here is questionable for there is no definite evidence that this text dates from the times when Hatra was ruled by a king.

[109] Ibrahim (1986: 506) and Vattioni (1981: 51) suggest that only the first part of l.3, probably enumerating Abdogailu's titles, is missing. Caquot (1963: 6) assumes almost three lines to be lacking. The remaining cluster of characters at the end of l.3 may represent Parthian *-ptʾ* which corresponds in meaning with Aramaic *mrʾ*, *master*, *chief* (Harnack

ṣlmʾ dy ʿbdʿgylw
br ʾlkwd br šmšbrk
[   ]ptʾ
[ʿl] ḥyʾ bnyhy wʾḥyhy
[w]mn dy rḥy[m] lh dkyr
[lṭ]b wʾyqym ṣlmʾ
[dy ʿ]bdʿgylw br ʾlkwd ʾlkw[d]
[w]ʿbdsmyʾ bnyhy [d]ʿbdʿgy[lw]
[byr]ḥ mrḥšwn bšnt 400 +
149

> *Translation:* The statue of Abdogailu son of Elkud son of Shamashbarek [and] chief of [ ] for the life of his sons and his brothers and whoever is dear to him. May it be remembered for good. And Elkud and Abdsimia sons of Abdogailu have erected the statue of Abdogailu son of Elkud. In the month Marheshwan in the year 549 (= November 237 AD).[110]

The first two lines identify the statue, whereas ll.4–5 mention the beneficiaries. As in other instances, *dkyr lṭb* (ll.5–6) refers to the act of dedication. In ll.6–8 the dedicators of the statue are presented. Thus, the order of the text deviates considerably from the norm. Usually, dedicators are mentioned immediately after the identification of the statue. This change suggests that the dedicators wish to highlight the social relationships between the person represented by the statue and the beneficiaries. As sons of Abdogailu the dedicators list themselves among them. Elkud and Abdsimia put up a statue of their father *for the life of* themselves and other sons of Abdogailu, as well as Abdogailu's brothers and *whoever is dear* to Abdogailu, i.e. the remaining members of his 'house' and his clients. The effect of the act is similar to that of Abdogailu having dedicated an altar or the like *for the life of* himself and each of the particular categories of beneficiaries. If the dedicators are destined to tread in their father's footsteps as a prominent member of the élite, then their act may aim to reinforce their father's bonds of patronage to show their good intentions when assuming them.

1970: 508ff). Vattioni, however, restores *[gl]ptʾ*, *the sculptors*, which in this context is less probable.

[110] Cf. for the familial relationship of Abdogailu and his sons with the dedicators of H79 and the beneficiaries of H81: Dijkstra (1990: 87ff).

H34 is engraved on the base (11.1–2) and the socle of another statue. It was found in shrine no. 5 dedicated to the goddess Isharbel. The reading of 1.3, the first on the socle, is difficult, but Safar's (1952) photograph proves Milik's (DFD: 373) restoration to be correct.

byrḥ ʾdr šnt 546
ṣlmtʾ dy mrtbw kmrt
[ʾ]š[r]bl bnyt kw[l] dy ʾqym[111]
lh brʾ brh br ʿbdšl[mʾ]
br brʾ kmrʾ wʿbd lbwšʾ[112]
ʾḥyhy ʿl ḥyyhwn wʿl
ḥyʾ bnyhwn wʿl ḥyʾ mn
dy rḥym lhwn šbz glpʾ

Translation: In the month Adar of the year 546 (= March 235 AD). The statue of Martabu, priestess of Isharbel *creatrix* of the Universe, which has erected for her Bara, her son, son of Abdshalma son of Bara, the priest, and his brother has made the garment for the life of themselves and for the life of their sons and for the life of whoever is dear to them. Shabaz, the sculptor.

As in H405 the statue represents a religious dignitary. Despite the explicit absence of a divine recipient, this may in fact evoke the religious connotations of the inscription. The statue of Martabu was erected by her son Bara, who appears to be a son of Abdshalma son of Bara, the priest.[113] The statue was clad in a garment made by someone indicated as his brother but not named. Having different fathers, the dedicators may have shared Martabu as a mother but only Bara's genealogy is presented at length. Since his grandfather was a priest, Bara, in his patrilinear lineage, may have belonged to a prominent family. His brother, on the other hand, remains unnamed, although he participated in the dedication. Presumably, he was related to a non-élite family. This discrepancy in genealogy may explain the disparate nature of the objects of dedication. Bara dedicates the statue; his brother its garment. The dedication of a statue undoubtedly adds more to someone's prestige than that of a garment so that the nature of the objects reflects the social positions of the dedicators.

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[111] Milik reads *dy ʾq[ym] lh brʾ br ʿbdšbt[ʾ], which has erected for her Bara son of Abdshabta.* Safar's (1953b) drawing demonstrates that Milik's suggestion is improbable for it fails to read a number of characters.

[112] The interpretation of *wʿbd lbwšʾ* is problematical. Various proposals have been made, all of which make a certain sense. Caquot (1953: 240) believes it to be a double name consisting of the elements 'Abdel' and 'Bosha'. Milik (DFD: 373) reads the personal name 'Abd' followed by the professional designation *the dresser*, *lbwšʾ*, "donc le prêtre chargé de vêtir quotidiennement les statues divines". He derives *lbwšʾ* from *lbš*, *to clothe* (Payne Smith 1903: 235). Aggoula (1969: 92) also interprets it as a personal name. Instead of *ʿbdlbwšʾ*, though, he reads *gbrlbwšʾ*, *man of armes* (Payne Smith 1903: 235). However, as an element of personal names *gbr* only appears in H402 (*nbwgbr*) in Hatra. Another possibility is that *ʿbd* is a verb 3rd person singular perfect and *lbwšʾ* meaning *garment* (Payne Smith 1903: 234) is its object whilst the subject is *ʾḥyhy* (1.6).

[113] Cf. Milik (DFD: 373), who states that *kmrʾ* qualifies the grandson. This suggestion is possible, but it is more likely that the grandfather is meant.

H35 originates from shrine no. 5 too. It is engraved in its entirety on the socle of a statue.[114]

> *b ʾlwl šnt 549 ṣlmtʾ*
> *dy qymy brt ʿbdsmyʾ ḥmrʾ*[115]
> *ʾntt nšrʿqb sprʾ dbrmryn*
> *dy ʾmrt lh ʾšrbl btlh*[116]
> *wʾyqymt lnpšh ʿl ḥyyh wʿl ḥ[yʾ]*
> *nšr ʿqb bʿlh wʿbsʾ ʾḥwhy [wʿl ḥyʾ]*
> *dyrʾ klh gwytʾ wbrytʾ dbrmryn wmn*[117]
> *dy rḥym lhwn kwlh*
>
> *Translation:* In Elul of the year 549 (= September 238 AD). The statue of Qaimi daughter of Abdsimia, the wine-seller, wife of Neshraqab, the scribe of Barmaren, which the Virgin Isharbel has ordered her. And she herself has erected it for the life of herself and for the life of Neshraqab, her husband, and Absa, her brother and for the life of all the personnel of Barmaren, both inside and outside, and whoever is dear to them, all of them.

A noblewoman erected a statue of herself. She justifies her act of self-aggrandizement by assuring that it results from explicit orders of the goddess. The conspicuous role of the goddess suggests that religious connotations may be attached to the formula *ʿl ḥyy*. The beneficiaries are first of all the dedicator herself and her husband. Subsequently, Absa is listed who is a brother either of Qaimi or of Neshraqab since the suffix may refer to either of them. If he is a brother of Neshraqab, then Qaimi undoubtedly had her reasons for listing him as a beneficiary. If he is her own brother, then the inscription testifies and reinforces her ties with the 'house' into which she was born and implies that she was not unconditionally handed over to her husband's family when marrying him. Indeed, noblewomen enjoyed a certain freedom in Hatrene society. The listing of cult-personnel as beneficiaries is of course closely linked with the husband's function as a scribe of Barmaren. Hence Qaimi reinforces her husband's relationship with his colleagues and employees. Ll.7–8 mention *whoever is dear to them* where the suffix refers to Qaimi, her husband and her brother.

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[114] Cf. for a drawing of H35: Safar (1953b) and Ibrahim (1986: 496). The reading of l.7 by both Safar (1953b) and Caquot (1953: 240) has been corrected by Aggoula (1969: 92f).

[115] *ḥmrʾ*: cf. Payne Smith (1903: 147).

[116] Lipinski (1982: 123f) considers *btlh* to be an adjunct of place, viz. in/at Tille, "une localité . . . dans la région de Haut Habur". Nevertheless, his article demonstrates that the nature of Isharbel resembles that of goddesses like Allat and Aphrodite. Thus, he, perhaps unwittingly, strengthens the suggestion that *btlh* should be derived from *btwl*, *virgin* (Payne Smith 1903: 57), like most commentators do. In Arabic the verb *ʾmr* means *to command* (Payne Smith 1903: 20).

[117] *dyrʾ klh gwytʾ wbrytʾ*: cf. Milik (DFD: 366).

H20, engraved on a socle attached to the eastern wall of shrine no. 3, the temple of Baalshamin, records that someone erected a statue representing himself.

> *ṣlmʾ dʿbdsmyʾ br wrdnb*[118]
> *br šly ʾqym lnpšh ʿl*
> *ḥyyhy ddh wdʾḥyhy*
> *wdmn drḥym lh klh*
> *dkyr lṭb*
>
> *Translation:* The statue of Abdsimia son of Worodnabu son of Shullai. He himself has erected it for the life of himself and that of his brother and that of whoever is dear to him, all of them. May it be remembered for good.

The act of self-aggrandizement is presented as intending to please others. Since the dedicator lists himself as a beneficiary alongside the others he makes himself equal to them by which he mollifies the nature of his act. Simultaneously, it suggests that the connotations of the formula *ʿl ḥyy* may be extended despite the absence of a divine recipient. Certainly, the dedication of a statue of oneself has a different impact on beneficiaries than that of (part of) a temple or an altar or some other cultic utensil. Confronted with his image, they are all the more reminded of the 'goodness' of their patron.

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[118] Caquot's (1952: 100) drawing leaves no doubt about the reading. The name, however, is hard to interpret with the "b" at the end posing problems. It has been assumed that it is a dittography of "b" at the beginning of l.2 (Milik 1962: 54; *BES* 1967: 189). The name, then should be read as *Wardan*, wrdn, which occurs more often in contemporary Aramaic epigraphy (Stark 1971: 16; Abbadi 1983: 16). Nevertheless, considering the neat script, it is possible that, instead of one character too many there may be one short. The theophorous element *-nbw* may be written defectively. According to Vattioni's (1981: 75)

In a sub-category of dedicatory inscriptions where statues of human beings are presented as objects of dedication, one or more members of the royal family act as prime beneficiaries. The implication, without a dating, is that they belong to the last seventy years of the city's existence as an independent political entity.

H139 is inscribed above two broken consoles attached to a wall near the entrance of the great northern *iwan* of the central temple-complex (Andrae 1912: 162). As Neshryahb is mentioned as the king's grandson, it dates from the reign of Sanatruq I.[119]

> *ṣlmʾ dy nšryhb br n[y]hrʾ*
> *br snṭrwq mlkʾ dy ʾqym*
> *lh mnyš [m]hymnʾ ʿl ḥyʾ*[120]
> *snṭrwq mlkʾ wʿl ḥy[y]h d[m]nyš*
>
> *Translation:* The statue of Neshryahb son of Nihra son of king Sanatruq, which has erected for him Manish, the confidant, for the life of king Sanatruq and for the life of Manish.

As a confidant of the king, the dedicator held an exalted position at the king's court (Drijvers 1982a: 183). He had a statue representing the king's grandson erected to emphasize and to reinforce his close social relationship with the king. Concomitantly, it may express his appreciation for the king's attitude towards him and, in turn, his loyalty towards the king. For some reason, however, the king's grandson acts as an intermediary. This complex way of honouring a person by means of a statue representing someone else seems to have been very popular in Hatra, especially when a member of the royal family acted as a beneficiary. Usually, a close social and/or functional relationship between the person represented and the beneficiary exists too. These

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restoration, the same name may occur in H203 (l.5): *[w]rdnb[w]*. In this context, it is conspicuous that the name *snṭrwq* is written as *snṭrwqw* in H341, suggesting that final "*w*" might be dropped.

[119] Cf. Appendix H.

[120] Cf. for the meaning of *mhymnʾ* the comments upon H290 above.

peculiar circumstances may explain the employment of the formula *for the life of* rather than *in honour of*, *lyqr*. After all, it is not primarily the person represented that is bestowed with the honour of having his statue erected. Whilst he does glorify in the erection of his statue, the honour that associated automatically with the erection of a statue is diverted to another, the king or one of his immediate kin. Over and above the formula *in honour of*, the formula *for the life of* lends itself to this purpose. It allows for the dedicator to list himself among the beneficiaries as in H139.

H223 is engraved on the base (l.1) and the socle of a statue found in the great northern *iwan* of the central temple-complex. Since there is only one king by the name of Abdsimia (l.6), it should be dated to the end of the second century AD. Ibrahim's (1986: 516) drawing and Drijvers' (1970: 370) photograph assure the following text:

ṣlmʾ [d]y ʾprhṭ
rbytʾ dy ʿrb
dʾqym lh ʿqbʾ
rbytʾ dbrmryn br
šmšy rbytʾ ʿl
ḥyʾ ʿbdsmyʾ
mlkʾ mrh wʿl ḥyʾ
bnyhy

Translation: The statue of Afrahat, the major-domo of Arab, which Aqiba, the major-domo of Barmaren, son of Shamshi, the major-domo, has erected for him for the life of king Abdsimia, his patron, and for the life of his sons.

The major-domo of the temple of Barmaren erected a statue representing the major-domo of Arab *for the life of* king Abdsimia, the dedicator's patron, and the king's sons (Drijvers 1982a: 184). Since the Hatrene king is elsewhere described as *the king of Arab*, the title *major-domo of Arab* probably marks a serious political office, possibly a minister of internal affairs (Dijkstra 1990: 90). The erection of a statue of one of his confidants was apparently considered to please the king, otherwise the king would not have been listed as a beneficiary. Since the king is presented as a patron of the major-domo of Barmaren, providing that the dependence is functional instead of personal, it indicates that the royal family is involved in the affairs of this deity's temple.

H195 is engraved on the base of a statue found in the so-called "Square Temple" directly behind the great southern *iwan* of the central temple-comple (Safar 1973: 95). The Square Temple was dedicated to Shamash, patron-deity of the city. According to the drawings of Safar (1962: 57) and Ibrahim (1986: 512), the text is:

> *ṣlmʾ dy snṭrwq mlkʾ br ʿbdsmyʾ mlk[ʾ]*
> *dʿrb dy ʾqym lh nšryhb rbẏtʾ dmrn br*
> *zydʾlt ʿl ḥyʾ ʿbdsmyʾ pšgryʾ brh*[121]
>
> *Translation:* The statue of king Sanatruq, son of Abdsimia, king of Arab, which has erected for him Neshryahb, the major-domo of Maren, son of Zaidilat for the life of Abdsimia, the Crown Prince, his son.

The king's genealogy (l.1) identifies him as Sanatruq II. Therefore, the dedication should be dated to the first decades of the third century AD. The text relates the hommage of the major-domo of the temple of Our Lord to the Crown Prince by the erection of a statue of his father (Drijvers 1982a: 183). If the inscription is concerned with the relationship between dedicator and beneficiary, then his intentions could not have been expressed better. In view of the king's position, however, he may have found two ways of pleasing the king. First in erecting a statue representing him, and secondly in making his son a beneficiary of the act. If this is the case, then it is not the relationship between dedicator and beneficiary that is reinforced by the formula. Instead, it plays a role similar to that of the statue as an object of dedication. It acts as an intermediary reinforcing the relationship between dedicator and king. In either case, however, the connotations of the formula are reminiscent of, but certainly do not coincide with those of the formula *in honour of.*

Sanatruq II appears as a beneficiary in H28, which is inscribed on two fragments of limestone found in the debris near shrine no. 3, the temple of Baalshamin. The first fragment contains ll.1–3; the second ll.4–5 (Caquot 1953: 234). The nature of the object of dedication is completely obscure. It may have been a statue, but could just as well have been an altar or the like. Nevertheless, the inscription belongs to the reign of Sanatruq II, because H36, dated to 549 Seleucid Era (= 238 AD), mentions *Batsimia, mother of the Crown Prince, btsmy ʾmʾ dy pzgrybʾ*, which partially reproduces the phrase *[ ]smyʾ ʾmʾ [d]ʿbdsmyʾ pšgrbʾ* of H28.[122]

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[121] Although Aggoula (1969: 99) and Vattioni (1981: 72) suggest the reading *[ʿ]wydʾlt* instead of *zydʾlt*, the drawings—if they are accurate—definitely show the first character to be a "z". The letter does not show the slight curve of the "w" as in *snṭrwq* (l.1). The scribe appears to have forgotten the "b" in *pšgry(b)ʾ*.

> *[bt]smyʾ ʾmʾ*
> *[d]ʿbdsmyʾ pšgrbʾ*
> *[br] snṭrwq mlkʾ*
> *ʿl ḥ[yʾ] snṭrwq*
> *mlkʾ ʾbʾ dbnyh*[123]
>
> *Translation:* [Bat]simia, the mother of Abdsimia, the Crown Prince, son of king Sanatruq for the life of king Sanatruq, the father of her children.

The text confirms that noblewomen enjoyed a certain freedom to act in Hatra. Secondly, it suggests that the king did not practice monogamy for otherwise there would have been no need for Batsimia to emphasize that she gave birth to the Crown Prince. Presumably, it enhanced her social status, and perhaps that of her other children. Or, she may have intended to ostentatiously consolidate her position amidst the prominent male members of the royal family. Concomitantly, her motive for dedicating something *for the life of* her husband, the king, may have been in thanks for the procreation of the Crown Prince.

According to most commentators (Degen 1978: 78; Chaumont 1979: 26; Segal 1986: 64), Sanatruq II is also listed as a beneficiary in H287. This inscription is engraved on the socle of a statue found at the southern side of the separation-wall between the two courtyards at the western end of the main sanctuary. A comparison of the text of Degen (1978: 77) with the drawing of Ibrahim (1986: 522) yields the following text:

> *[ ]ʿd/rnyh*
> *[b]r klbslʾ [ʾ]špzkh*[124]

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[122] Safar's (1953b) drawing of H36 has only one "ʾ" at the end of *btsmyʾ* and the beginning of *ʾmʾ*; an example of haplography.

[123] *bnyh* may be rendered here as *her children*. It is unknown whether Abdsimia had brothers. A sister with the same parents, Dushfari, is known (H36).

[124] Aggoula (1975: 186) proposes this reading and he maintains that according to Payne

> *ʿl ḥyʾ snṭrwq mlkʾ*
> *dʿrbyʾ wʿbdsmyʾ*[125]
> *pšgrybʾ brh [wʿl]*
> *ḥyyhy [ddh w]ʿl ḥyʾ*
> *bnyhy [dd]h klh [ ]*[126]
> *dyʿb[ ]*
>
> *Translation:* [ ] son of Kalbsulla, the landlord, for the life of Sanatruq, king of the Arabians, and Abdsimia, the Crown Prince, his son, and for the life of himself and for the life of his sons, all of them, [ ].

Since it is engraved on a socle, it is likely that the inscription belonged to a statue, although due to the incomplete contents of the former, the identity of the latter must remain obscure. The order of beneficiaries suggests that the dedicator intends either to establish or reinforce his relationship with the royal family. The subsequent listing of the dedicator himself and his sons may reflect his expectation that if the contemplated action is implemented, he and his sons will benefit from it.

H144 also originates from the central temple-complex. Details about the archaeological conditions in which it was found are lacking. Furthermore, it is unclear whether it dates from the reign of Sanatruq I or Sanatruq II.[127] Despite this uncertainty, its reading is established (Caquot 1964: 260; Vattioni 1981: 63):

> *ṣlmʾ dy*
> *wrwd rbytʾ*
> *br brnšrʾ*
> *rbytʾ*

Smith's *Thesaurus* it is attested in Syriac with the meaning *major-domo, landlord.* If so, then it is a synonym of *rbytʾ*.

[125] This is the only instance describing the king of Hatra as *mlkʾ dʿrbyʾ*. Contrary to the usual conception, however, it probably does not denote a specific territory larger than that indicated by the designation *Arab*, *ʿrb* (Dijkstra 1990: 94ff). Instead, *ʿrbyʾ*—a regular *nisbe*-form—refers to the people Sanatruq rules, i.e. the inhabitants of the steppe surrounding the city or *Arabians*.

[126] The restorations *ddh* (ll.6–7) are proposed by Degen (1978: 79). The suffixes refer to the dedicator.

[127] The vagueness about king Sanatruq's identity might favour a date during Sanatruq I's reign. At that time there was only one Sanatruq and confusion about his identity therefore was precluded.

> *ʿl ḥyʾ snṭrwq*
> *mlkʾ*
>
> *Translation:* The statue of Worod, the major-domo, son of Barneshra, the major-domo, for the life of king Sanatruq.

Apart from the beneficiary not being identified, the text provides little information about the dedicator. *Worod son of Barneshra* is cited, but was he also responsible for the statue's erection? Presumably, Worod was, since a dedicator is not explicitly mentioned. Indeed, it is not unknown in Hatra for a dedicator to erect a statue of himself (H20, H35). However, it does not seem to have been found in a context which suggests that the beneficiaries belong to the royal family. If Worod is the dedicator, his act of self-aggrandizement is mitigated by directing the prestige to be gained by it towards the king. In doing so, Worod declares his loyalty.

In Hatra the erection of statues is not always accompanied by an inscription containing a dedicatory formula. Quite a large number were found in which simply the words *the statue of*, *ṣlmʾ dy*, engraved on a socle or console suggests the erection of a statue. However, the majority of them are so incomplete that despite attempts to restore them, they do not provide a proper frame of interpretation. Often only the name of the person who is represented remains. This observation applies both to the category of inscriptions recording the erection of statues representing members of the royal family (H277, H285, H348, H372, H376, H386) as well as that which has a wider, more general, application (H21, H110, H111, H114, H115, H142, H143, H189, H226, H292, H350, H366, H381, H382, H387, H400, H402, H414). In some instances, the text seemingly aims at nothing more than to identify the person represented. Again, this applies both to statues of members of the royal family (H194, H196, H198, H352, H353, H361) as well as others (H56, H113).

In addition, a number of inscriptions record the erection of someone's statue by someone else without using honorific formulae. Again, these statues may represent both members of the royal family as well as others. H5 is engraved on a socle found in shrine no. 1.

> *ṣlmtʾ dy smy brt ʿgʾ br*
> *ʾšṭṭy br slwk dy ʾyqym lh ʿgʾ*
> *bʿlh br ʾbʾ kmrʾ dʾtrʿtʾ*

> *ʾbʾ glp br ʿgʾ zrqʾ*
> *ʾbʾ glp*
>
> *Translation:* The statue of Simai daughter of Oge son of Ashtatai son of Seleukos, which has erected for her Oge, her husband, son of Aba, the priest of Atargatis. Aba has sculpted it, son of Oge Zorqa. Aba has sculpted it.[128]

Similarly, H30 involves a husband erecting a statue of his wife. On two occasions the statue was put up by a deity, viz. Isharbel (H38) and Barmaren (H228). Both these inscriptions are badly damaged, ensuing that the motives for the erection of the statues will remain obscure; if they were mentioned at all. Perhaps the persons honoured had proven themselves favourable to the temples of the respective deities. The persons represented by the statues referred to in the remaining texts either bear a title (H83, H362(?): *hdrpṭʾ*; H224, H381: *rbytʾ*; H364: *rbytʾ dʿrb*) or hold an office at the royal court which is described with reference to the king (H203: *tutor of king Sanatruq*, *mrbynʾ dy snṭrwq mlkʾ*; H286: [ ] *of king Vologash*, *[ ]qrʾ dwlgš mlkʾ*). Only once the high social status is indicated differently, when the person represented in H363 is described as *benefactor*, *ʿbd ṭbt[ʾ]*. Presumably, the persons represented in one way or another had proven themselves favourable to the dedicators while holding a particular office. However, it becomes even more complicated when some of the dedicators also bear a title (H364: *rbytʾ dmrtn*; H224: *rbytʾ dbrmryn*; H362: *rbytʾ dmrn*; H145: *kmrʾ dy nrgl dḥšpṭʾ*). Once, the dedicator describes himself as a *client*, *rḥmh*, of the person represented. Both the persons honoured and the dedicators belong to the civic élite. Therefore, the statues are expressions of the exchange of favours and honours that members of the civic élite, who entertain a social relationship of mutual dependence, *hospitium*, are accustomed to bestow on each other.

In order to emphasize the honoured person's status, H363 describes him as *the benefactor, beloved by gods and men*, *ʿbdṭbt[ʾ] rḥym lʾlhʾ wʾnšʾ*. In a slightly different formulation, it is applied to lord Nasru in H346: *the benefactor of gods and men*, *ʿbyd ṭbtʾ lʾlhʾ wʾnš*. But other members of the royal family are also honoured with a statue. H193 mentions lord Nasru's son, king Vologash; whilst another son, king Sanatruq I, is cited in H345 and H347. A statue of king Sanatruq II is referred to in H229; that of his daughter, Dushfari, in H36; and probably that of another member of Sanatruq II's family in H112.[129] Finally, H351 has a statue of lord Neshryahb erected by his son lord Nasru. Usually, statues of members of the royal family are erected by individuals who record only their names. In H345, however, the dedicator of a statue of king Sanatruq describes himelf as *major-domo of Our Lord*, *rbytʾ dmrn*, and in H36 he describes himself as a *client*, *rḥmh*, of princess Dushfari.

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[128] Conspicuously, the names occurring in this inscription each belong to very different cultural backgrounds, viz. Arabic, Iranian and Greek. Thus, the inscription may illustrate the observation that Hellenistic culture in general and that of Hatra in particular is composed of many strands, but still functions as an organic unity.

Unlike Palmyra, the formula *in honour of*, *lyqr*, is absent from Hatrene inscriptions recording the erection of statues. Presumably, because it was considered obvious that the person represented by the statue was honoured with it. Even the formula *for the life of* is not employed in this context. Its use is restricted to dedications in which the beneficiary is not identical to the person represented or in which more than one person is to be honoured. In Palmyra the formula *in honour of* is employed in these instances as well.

The Hatrene *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions in which the object of dedication is a statue representing a human being adds a complete new dimension to the semantic value of the formula. The very fact that it is applied to statues of human beings in combination with the explicit absence of a divine recipient has its connotations moving from an entirely religious—with the explicit role of a deity that is expected to reciprocate the dedication—to a more public realm—without an explicit divine recipient and/or divine reciprocator—. However, due to its religious semantics, its scope still exceeds that of the formula

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[129] The dedicator in H112 is called *Yahbarmaren son of Abdsimia, the attendant of Dushfari*, *yhbrmryn br ʿbdsmyʾ ʾqlwtʾ dy dwšpry* (Caquot 1964: 254). The person represented is *Sanatruq son of Sanatruq, master of the hunt*, *snṭrwq br snṭrwq nḥšrpṭʾ* (Harnack 1970: 544). Although no royal epithets are attached to either of the Sanatruqs, it is possible that the one represented by the statue is a son that king Sanatruq II procreated by one of the ladies of his harem which explains the absence of royal epithets and the simultaneous holding of an important office. His exalted status is implied by the fact that the dedicator is *the attendant of* Dushfari. Yahbarmaren's closeness to the princess suggests a high status. Sanatruq's status, then, must at least have been equal to Yahbarmaren's and was probably higher. Otherwise the latter would not have bothered to erect a statue of him. This, in turn, implies that the office incumbent on Sanatruq was much respected at the royal court. In order to neutralize their claims on the throne, it has been common for rulers throughout history to either expel their bastards from court with the danger of losing control over them, or to meet their demands by appointing all kinds of honorary posts to them and keep them under control.

in honour of which has no religious connotations at all. This derived employment of the formula must have affected its meaning in a traditional setting.

The larger freedom in the employment of the formula in Hatra is confirmed by H67, in one line inscribed on the lintel of the cella of shrine no. 10. This shrine is dedicated to Nergal (Caquot 1955: 267; Safar 1973: 89):

> *bnḥšʾ ṭ[bʾ ʿ]l ḥyʾ nṣrw mryʾ ʾpk[l]ʾ rbʾ dʾlhʾ*[130]
>
> *Translation:* With good prospects for the life of lord Nasru, the high-priest of the god.

The formula is here closely connected with the practice of divination. A dedicator is not explicitly mentioned, whereas only lord Nasru is listed as a beneficiary. Hence, it is not the act of dedication that gives meaning to the formula, but the act of divination. Possibly it was executed on the occasion of the foundation of the shrine. Since lord Nasru is presented as the sole beneficiary, he may have instigated the foundation. The divination, then, reassured that it was a happy initiative. His listing as a beneficiary might express such a course of events. On the other hand, the divination might have nothing to do with founding the shrine, but more with lord Nasru's administrative policy. Then H67 expresses that at least (the temple of) Nergal sustained his policy. Yet in this situation, the inscription of the text on the lintel of the cella—usually the place for foundation-inscriptions—is awkward.

If lord Nasru indeed was involved in the construction of the shrine, then it would be appropriate that the qualification *high-priest of the god* refers to Nergal, its patron-deity. Teixidor (1966: 91ff) suggests that both political and religious power accumulated in the hands of the ruler during the reign of lord Nasru. Eventually, this enabled his sons Vologash and Sanatruq I to assume the title 'king'. Although fiercely contested by Milik (DFD: 361), this proposal may be feasible if *dʾlhʾ* is a plural instead of a singular. In that case Nasru is described as the inevitable high-priest of every member of the pantheon, by which office he wielded supreme religious power. Milik emphasizes that Nasru was not succeeded in the title by his descendants, the kings, and that consequently he did not exercize supreme religious power himself. However, this argument may easily be countered if the title

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[130] *nḥšʾ*: *augury, divination* (Payne Smith 1903: 336).

‘king’ is conceived of as including such power.[131] A more serious argument against Teixidor’s adjusted view is that H345 and the inscription which Aggoula (1989: 311) commented upon both suggest that the full title is *the high-priest of the god Shamash*, *ʾpklʾ rbʾ dy šmš ʾlhʾ*. The man wielding supreme political power is the high-priest of the supreme Hatrene deity. Whilst only part of the title appears in H352, *the high-priest*, *ʾpklʾ rbʾ*, and in H67 and perhaps H361, *the high-priest of the god*, *ʾpklʾ rbʾ dy ʾlhʾ*, still Shamash is meant. The occurrence of the abbreviated title in another deity’s shrine might nevertheless indicate the subordinate position of the latter which, partially, reverts back to Teixidor’s view (Segal 1986: 66).

Roman presence and influence in Hatra

As in Palmyra (CIS II, no. 3971), on one occasion the Aramaic equivalent of Latin *pro victoriis*, *for the victory of*, is found in Hatra. Unlike the Palmyrene example, however, it is not connected with preceding *ʿl ḥyy*. H341, engraved on a block of limestone from the northern city-gate that probably belonged to the lintel of an entrance, presents the following text.[132]

> *[bnʾ sn]ṭrwqw zdq br ʿbdsmyʾ mlkʾ*[133]
> *[lnrgwl] wlnšrʾ mrn ʿl zkywtʾ dy ʾbyhy*
> *[   ]d/rtʾ dy ʿqbʾ*
>
> *Translation:* Sanatruqu, the righteous, son of king Abdsimia has built this for Nergol and for our Lord Neshra for the victory of his father [   ] of Aqiba.

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[131] In H346 and H371 the qualification *[dḥl] ʾlhʾ*, *worshipper of the god(s)*, εὐσεβῆς, is restored. Said of king Sanatruq I, its meaning might be similar to that of ‘high-priest of the gods’. Since it refers to a successor of lord Nasru, it would challenge Milik’s argument. However, in both instances the verb is completely restored and therefore the idea should be advanced with caution.

[132] Aggoula’s (1981: 370) restorations for ll.1–2 are plausible, since the gate was dedicated to Nergal and on the basis of the identical opening line of H333. That of l.3, however, is questionable where he suggests: *[wlq]rtʾ dy ʿqbʾ*, *and in honour of Aqiba*. The formula *in honour of*, *lyqr*, is attested in Hatra once where it is written, albeit defectively, in H65. Therefore, caution should surround its restoration or of some derivative formula. Besides, Ibrahim’s (1986: 528) drawing suggests that more characters are missing than the three restored by Aggoula.

[133] *zdq*: Payne Smith (1903: 110).

Since Sanatruq does not bear the title 'king' which is only used in relation to Abdsimia, the construction- or reparation-works referred to must belong to the reign of Abdsimia. He probably defended Hatra against Septimius Severus at the end of the second century AD. If it were not for the striking parallel in meaning between the formulae *pro victoriis* and *ʿl zkywtʾ*, one might believe that the inscription definitely refers to Abdsimia's glorious victory over Septimius.[134] Usually, however, the formula *pro victoriis*, whether or not in combination with *pro salute*, denotes a quality of the person in question rather than a concrete event, which is why it can easily be combined with *pro salute*.

Of the three Latin inscriptions which were found in shrine no. 9 at Hatra (Caquot 1955c: 272), one has the equivalent of Aramaic *ʿl ḥyy*, *pro salute*. On account of the consuls which have been referred to, one of them can be dated to 235 AD (Maricq 1957: 288) and it is widely accepted that the others belong to approximately the same period. Indeed, their dedicator is described as *tribune of the 9th cohort* of legionaries, also known as *Gordianae*, which had been recruited among the *Mauri*. The name is reminiscent of the Roman Emperor Gordian III (238–244 AD). It appears, though, that the creation of this unit of legionaries was anterior to Gordian's reign (Chaumont 1979: 235, note 82). However this may be, it suggests with some certainty that the Latin inscriptions belonged to the third decade of the third century AD. Probably, they testify to an alliance between Hatra and Rome in order to ward off the Sassanid danger (Maricq 1957: 288f).[135]

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[134] The preposition *ʿl* carries the notion *because of* (Payne Smith 1903: 413) too.

[135] Aggoula (1983: 216ff) rejects the idea of an alliance between Rome and Hatra for such purposes. He believes that the dedications resulted from the accidental visit of a Roman tribune, because Graeco-Roman cultural influence can be detected for a longer period of time. Therefore, the relations between Hatra and Rome must have naturally been friendly, only to be disrupted by the sieges of Trajan and Septimius Severus. In order to substantiate his view Aggoula points to the fact that the legion in question, *I Parthica*, was probably stationed elsewhere, viz. in Singara. On account of this, it is improbable that it was stationed at Hatra for a long period of time. Aggoula's view that prior to the third decade of the third century AD Roman cultural influence may be detected in Hatra remains sound. In fact, it is more likely that Romans were present than that they were absent. Yet, the validity of his conclusions about the nature of the Roman presence may be scrutinized. Latin inscriptions point to Roman and, in these regions, to military authors. Otherwise, they are rendered in Greek and/or Aramaic. In Palmyra, which entertained close relations with Rome, even the visit of the Roman Emperor is recorded in Greek, although a few Latin inscriptions have also been found. It is noteworthy that at the very time, that the Sassanids display a more than usual interest in the West, Latin texts are

The text of the inscription in question is engraved on the socle of a statue.

ERCULI SANCT	*Erculi sanct(o)*
PRO SALUTE DO	*pro salute do*
MINI NOSTRI AU[G Q][136]	*mini nostri Aug(usti) Q*
PETRONIUS QU[IN]	*Petronius Quin*
TIANUS DOM [NU][137]	*tianus dom(o) Nu*
MIDIA TRIB MIL	*midia trib(unus) mil(itum)*
LEG I P TRIB COH IX	*leg(ionis) I P(arthicae)*
	trib(unus) coh(ortis) IX
GORDIANAE GENIO COH	*Gordianae genio coh(ortis)*

> *Translation:* To the holy Hercules for the well-being of our Lord, the Emperor, Quintus Petronius Quintianus, the Numidian, tribune of the First Parthian legion, tribune of the 9th Gordian cohort (has dedicated) to the patron-deity of the cohort.[138]

In the vast realm of the Roman Empire, it is possible that no actual social relationship existed between the dedicator and the beneficiary. The employment of *pro salute*, then, requires a different explanation than the establishment or reinforcement of ties of kinship or friendship. In Asia Minor, the Cult of the Roman Emperor flourished as Price (1984) has described in detail. This dedication is primarily an expression of loyalty to the Roman Emperor. Apart from the religious connotations, the statement is not so important for the Emperor himself—indeed he never laid eyes on it personally—, but for the legionaries and the inhabitants of Hatra. It publicly declares the presence of the Roman army in the city and simultaneously emphasizes its good intentions. Although it incontestably originates from a Roman mind, Quintus Petronius has consciously sought to affiliate his dedi-

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attested in Hatra. Therefore, the presence of a Roman military detachment should not be surprising, no more than the formalization of such a presence by an alliance. Moreover, why should a legion stationed elsewhere not have been (partly) detached to defend the city, if conditions demanded it?

[136] The restoration of "Q" is based on one of the other Latin texts.

[137] Oates (1955: 40) restores *dom[ita]* and translates *after the victory over Media.* Maricq (1957: 289f) restores *dom[o Nico]midia, from the house of Nicomidia,* which is already more probable. Chaumont (1979: 235) suggests the reading presented above.

[138] Chaumont (1979: 235) provides a coherent story about Quintus Petronius. Downey (1968: 214ff) comments on the religious aspects of the dedication as well as the cultural and artistic qualities of the statue of Hercules, the object of dedication.

cation with extant local religious traditions (Maricq 1957: 290; Downey 1968: 214ff).

Inscriptions from the Hatrena

As the Palmyrena yielded a number of Palmyrene inscriptions, so the Hatrena has yielded some Hatrene inscriptions. Two of them employ the formula *for the life of.* In addition, the formula occurs in a Greek-Hatrene bilingual text that was found in Dura-Europos. The first of these three texts originates from Khirbet al-Saadiya, located at approximately 25 km east of Hatra (Caquot 1963: 12). Aggoula (1977a: 138) relates that it is a small oasis situated along a *wadi* that is still used by Beduins for watering their flocks and for agriculture on a limited scale. It is engraved on a block of limestone. According to Ibrahim's (1986: 528) drawing, the text is:

bnysn d 400[+][139]
36 ʿdnʾ[140]
wprkʾ dmrlhʾ[141]

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[139] The state of preservation precludes the reading of an exact date. The sign for 100 is missing, although it is certainly preceded by four strokes. Another stroke may have been attached to the sign, making the date either 436 or 536, provided that one or more signs of 20 did not succeed the sign of 100 in l.1. This corresponds with either 125 AD or 225 AD. In the present state of affairs it is impossible to decide which of the dates applies, despite Aggoula's (1972: 47) certainty about the former and Milik's (DFD: 395) about the latter. Compared to the inscriptions of nearby Khirbet Jaddalah, which are dated to 453 (= 142 AD), a date of 436 may be suggested.

[140] The interpretation of *ʿdnʾ* is problematical. Caquot (1963: 12) interprets it as a 'holy garden'. Aggoula (1977a: 139f) suggests that it describes the site as a station on a caravan-track. Considering that another *ʿdnʾ* is mentioned in l.7 which is said to belong to Nergol, Milik's (DFD: 398) suggestion, of a kind of chapel is more probable.

[141] Could Marelahe be affiliated with that of Edessene inscriptions from Sumatar Harabesi, who was identified with the moongod Sin (Teixidor 1964: 275f; Aggoula 1972: 47ff)? As already observed by Milik (DFD: 399) and Aggoula (1977a: 141), Sin does not occur elsewhere in Hatra. Aggoula is correct to discard Milik's restorations of a number of Hatrene inscriptions to create the presence of Marelahe. He is also right to reject Milik's suggestion that in Hatra Marelahe should be identified with Baalshamin. However, his own solution that the title refers to Bel of Ashur is not convincing (Aggoula 1977a: 141). Despite the fact that Marelahe cannot be properly identified, the text nevertheless qualifies him in l.4. Although Milik (DFD: 397) links it with *krk*, *fortress, city*, *dqdqbš* may be composed of a *palpel* of the verb *dq*, *to break into pieces*, (palpel) *to pound* (Payne Smith 1903: 96), and *byš*, *evil*, *bad* (Payne Smith 1903: 43). Marelahe, then, is described as the Crusher of Evil. As l.8 verifies, the character at the beginning of l.4 is not necessarily the *nota relationis*. It would only be natural for *d/rqd/rqbš* to indicate a quality of Marelahe,

> *dqdqbš dšrʾ bḥṭṭ*[142]
> *dʿbd znʾ br rḥny*
> *tryʾ*[143]
> *dḥzyʾ bḥlmʾ wʿbd*
> *twb ʿdnʾ dnrgwl*
> *dḥšp[ṭ]ʾ dšrʾ*[144]
> *bmlḥʾ ʿl ḥyʾ ʾbh*
> *wʾḥyh wbnyh wmn dr[ḥym lh]*[145]
> *dkyr lṭb hw znʾ*
>
> *Translation:* In Nissan of the year 436 (= April 125 AD) has made Zana son of Rahnai the chapel and the altar of Marelahe, the Crusher of Evil, who inhabits the fertile soil, for he was instructed in a dream twice. And he also has made the chapel of Nergol, the Executioner, who inhabits the barren soil, for the life of his father and his brother(s) and his sons and whoever is dear to him. May this Zana be remembered for good.

This text mentions two separate objects of dedication and correspondingly, two divine recipients. Their explicit opposition nevertheless suggests a certain relationship between them, if it only be that their spheres of activity complement each other. The relationship between dedicator and beneficiaries is couched in terms of kinship and friendship and it is conspicuous that the dedicator's father is listed among them.

Another inscription originates from Khirbet Jaddalah, located approximately 35 km north-east of Hatra. It is engraved on the lintel

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like *dḥšpṭʾ* describes a quality of Nergol. The rest of l.4 hints at Marelahe's dwelling-place in the same way as ll.8–9 hint at that of Nergol.

[142] As Teixidor (1964: 275) and Milik (DFD: 398f) have correctly observed *ḥṭṭ* is used in contrast to *mlḥʾ* (l.9). The latter refers to the salty desolation of the desert, whereas the former denotes a *source* or an *agricultural area* (Payne Smith 1903: 137; Aggoula 1977a: 140).

[143] Ibrahim's drawing shows Aggoula's (1977: 138) reading *bnyʾ* to be incorrect. It should be *tryʾ*. Milik's (DFD 295) interpretation, of *tryʾ* written supralinear and qualifying *ḥlmʾ*, is attractive and certainly the most simple solution.

[144] *dḥšpṭʾ*, *Executioner*: cf. Greenfield (1988).

[145] Aggoula (1977a: 138) restores *wmn ddk[rh]*, *and whoever remembers him*, which is not found in Ibrahim's drawing. Milik (DFD: 395) restores *wmn d[dh]*, *and whoever belongs to him*, which is compatible with the drawing. However, despite the apparent lack of space for the number of characters, *wmn dr[ḥym lh]*, *and whoever is dear to him*, is preferable on account of analogy. Like *tryʾ* which is written supralinear between ll.5–6, the rest of *wmn drḥym lh* may have been engraved sublinear in the missing part between ll.10–11.

of a room that is described by Ibrahim (1983: 227f) as a *fortified entrance*. The inscription is known as Ibr.XXI (Segal 1986: 80). A photograph and drawing were published by Ibrahim (1984: 120).

> *bšnt 453 bʿdrnʾ dy*
> *ʾlhʾ klhwn bnʾ ʾgy br ʾbʾ*
> *byrtʾ lnpšh ʿl ḥyyhy wḥyʾ bnyhy*[146]
> *wʾḥyhy wḥyʾ ʿwydʾšr ddh wplṭyʾ klhwn*[147]
>
> *Translation:* In the year 453 (= 142 AD) Aggai son of Aba has built, with the help of all the gods, the fortress himself for the life of himself and the life of his sons and his brothers and the life of Owaidashur, his friend, and all who followed (him).[148]

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[146] The meaning of *byrtʾ* is obscure. As suggested by Ibrahim (1983: 230) and sustained by Segal (1986: 66), it may denote both a shrine and a fortress. Aggoula (1987: 226) believes it to designate a private residence, especially since it follows *lnpšh*, *(for) himself*. Lemaire and Lozachmeur (1987: 261ff), who agree to the obscurity of the meaning of *byrtʾ*, demonstrate that the concept developed along a line similar to that of Greek πόλις, i.e. from initially denoting a *fortress* or *shrine* to a settlement or village or even a town. Instead of denoting a particular part of the construction, then, it refers to the entire settlement, that *Aggai son of Aba* founded and commanded. Aggoula's (1987: 228f) suggestion that the site was a base for controlling nomadic groups roaming the desert and a road-station on a caravan-track is plausible.

[147] Aggoula (1987: 227) derives *plṭyʾ* from Syriac *plṭʾ* or Greek πλατεῖα, both meaning *road* (Payne Smith 1903: 448). Hence, he renders it as *voyager*, *traveller*. However, since beneficiaries in *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions are usually related to the dedicator in terms of kinship or friendship or by a patron-client bond, it is unlikely that it refers to an undifferentiated group of people. Pennacchietti (1988: 143f) derives it from Syriac *plṭyn*, or Latin *palatium* (Payne Smith 1903: 448). He considers it to be a *nisbe*-form of *plṭyn*, *gli addetti al palazzo, il personale, la servitù del palazzo*, i.e. the personnel subordinated to Aggai. This corresponds with the usual nature of the relationship between dedicator and beneficiaries. However, Greek and Latin words are very scarce in Hatrene Aramaic. At present only in H408 can the Aramaic version of a Greek word be found. It concerns an architectural device and it is dated to 235 AD. More than 80 years after Ibr.XXI. Although Pennacchietti's conception of the word is attractive, a different derivation may be proposed. The verb *plṭ* is rendered by Payne Smith (1903: 448) as *to escape*; pael: *to save*, *to let escape*. Jastrow (1950) offers *to discharge*, *to tear off*, *to detach*; Sokoloff (1990) suggests for the pael of *plṭ*: *to discharge*, *to escape*, *to be rejected*, *to eject*. The meanings offered by Jastrow suggest that the verb describes the appointment of individuals in order to perform a task. Considering the function of the site, it may be that Aggai's arrangement of a road-station had been ordered by the Hatrene administration which had put him in command of a military detachment, the members of which were indicated by the *nisbe*-form *plṭyʾ*, *those detached*. In view of the segmentary structure of society, another possibility is that the verb describes a tribal segment that had fissured from a larger one. Yet it is possible too that it simply denotes that part of the city's inhabitants had moved. Whatever the nature of this group of people, they are indicated as *detached by* or *fissured from* the city under the command of Aggai.

[148] *dd* has two meanings in Syriac, viz. 1. *a friend* and 2. *an uncle on the father's side*

Once again the relationship between dedicator and beneficiaries is couched in terms of kinship and dependence. Aggai son of Aba is a powerful patron who reinforces his relationship with *his sons and brothers* as well as with his *friend*, and finally, those under his command or dependent on him. A proper divine recipient is absent. It is stated, though, that the construction of the fortress was accomplished *with the help of the gods*. They participate in the construction-works rather than acting as divine recipients of it. The connotations of the formula *for the life of* move from the religious side of the semantic spectrum in the direction of those pertaining to the formula *in honour of*.

A Hatrene-Greek bilingual originates from Dura-Europos. It is engraved on a stone table found in the courtyard of the temple of Atargatis. The photograph published by du Mesnil du Buisson (1938: 148) and the reconsideration of it by Naveh (1974: 9f) assure the following text:

dkrnʾ ṭbʾ lmlkwn br
šmyšw mḥzyʾ dy qryb[149]
mn ʿbdʾ hdyn lšmš ʾlhʾ
dnrʾ C ʿl ḥyyhy lʿlm

Μαλχίων Σομέσου
ἔδωκεν εἰς το ἀνάλω
μα θεοῦ Ἡλιῳ X ρ ὑπὲρ σω
τηρίας[150]

(Payne Smith 1903: 83). If the former applies, then it may be asked whether it is not a synonym of *rḥmh*, *his client*. Instead of a client, it may additionally denote a patron. Finally, it is possible that a friendship-relation governed by principles of *hospitium* is indicated.

[149] Count du Mesnil du Buisson (1938: 147f) read *mḥwzʾ*, *de la ville* (ou *de Mahoza*). He believed it to refer either to a town in general or to the pre-eminent town, *in casu* Seleucia-Ctesiphon. The inscriptions from Hatra prompted Caquot (1953: 245f) to reread the text, on the basis of their similar palaeography. Instead of *mḥwzʾ* he suggested *mḥybʾ*, to be derived from Syriac *ḥwb*, *to be guilty* (Payne Smith 1903: 129). Hence it should be rendered as *the culprit* or *the sinner* (Seyrig 1971: 351). Meanwhile, Milik (DFD: 333) holds it to be part of the dedicator's genealogy, viz. the name of his grandfather. Finally, the text was reconsidered by Naveh (1974: 9f) who correctly suggests *mḥzyʾ*, a *nisbe*-from of *mḥwz*, *harbor*, *marketplace*, *city*, which is confirmed by Teixidor (1983a: 309ff). The meaning, then, is *the man of the harbor*, *of the marketplace*, *of the city* or perhaps *harbor-master*. Naveh prefers the latter or *the townsman*. Since the dedicator probably originates from Hatra and therefore is a stranger in Dura, Naveh's alternative is preferable. The dedicator presents himself as a citizen of Dura.

[150] The sign X designates the currency in which the dedication is offered, viz. δηνάριον.

> *Translation: Hatrene*: Good remembrance for Malkion son of Shamishu, the citizen, who has offered to this work for the god Shamash 100 denarii for the life of himself for ever.
>
> *Greek*: Malkion son of Somesos has dedicated to Helios, in order to meet the expenses of the god, 100 denarii for (his) well-being.

The custom of contributing to the construction of temples by financial donations, is well-known in Hatra. However, since Shamash acts as a divine recipient, it is perplexing that the dedication was found in the temple of Atargatis. He could, of course, have been a θεός συνναός. On the other hand, the inscription may not have been found *in situ*, with the stone being reused in a later construction. The dedication is offered *for the life of* the dedicator himself only. It does not intend to reinforce kinship or friendship-relations and may reflect his status as an immigrant. Deprived of his primary social relationships, the dedicator obtained the privilege of citizenship in his new home-town; a possible explanation of the unusual addition *for ever*, *lʿlm* (l.4). Thus the dedicator expresses his hopes that assisted by Shamash he may succeed in his new environment.

Summary

The Hatrene perception and employment of the formula differs conspicuously from both the Nabataean and the Palmyrene usage. In common with the Nabataean genre, kings may act as beneficiaries to express the dedicator's loyalty. As occurred in the Palmyrene examples, the dedicator's kin may act as beneficiaries. In addition, the expression *whoever is dear to him* occasionally draws in the dedicator's clientele or whoever is associated with him. Considering its place in the order of beneficiaries, it may partially equal the Palmyrene phrase *the members of his (entire) house*, *bny byth (klh)*, which is practically absent in Hatra. Unlike both the Nabataean and Palmyrene inscriptions, a divine recipient is often absent.

Remarkably, and again unlike Nabataean and Palmyrene custom, in Hatra the objects of dedication are not restricted to temples and cultic utensils, including cult-reliefs, cult-statues and altars. Statues representing human-beings have also been used. The formula is employed to direct the honorific connotations pertaining to the erection of a statue to someone else. This Hatrene custom differs from the Palmyrene practice of erecting statues *in honour of* in that the person represented and the beneficiary are not the same person. If the person represented is to glory in the erection of a statue, no formula whatsoever is employed to emphasize it. The act is simply considered to be tacit. This final feature of the Hatrene employment of the formula suggests that in relation to both Nabataean and Palmyrene usage, its semantic spectrum has broadened to include 'down-to-earth' connotations like those attached to the formula *in honour of*.

CHAPTER FIVE

FOR THE LIFE OF...

INCIDENTAL FINDINGS AND GREEK AND LATIN EQUIVALENTS

Apart from the clusters of dedicatory inscriptions containing the Aramaic formula *ʿl ḥyy* or a Greek or Latin equivalent found in Hatra, Palmyra and the Nabataean Empire, incidental findings have been made throughout the Fertile Crescent. The single Aramaic samples are earlier or contemporary with the Hatrene, Palmyrene and Nabataean *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions. By contrast, the Greek and Latin ones are contemporary or posterior to them. Most of the Aramaic ones were found at sites in or at the fringe of the Syrian-Mesopotamian desert, whereas the Greek and Latin ones originate mainly from the Mediterranean coastal area. The occurrence of Greek and Latin inscriptions in this particular region is due to the aspirations of Alexander the Great. Subsequently, at the end of the Seleucid era, Roman power eased, from 63 BC onwards, the way for Greek and Roman cultural influences to intermingle with local traditions to form the Hellenistic East. Religiously, it manifested itself in the identification of Oriental deities with Greek ones and *vice versa* by the comparison of their individual qualities. As a consequence, in areas under firm control such as the Mediterranean coast and in cities like Dura-Europos, Greek surpassed Aramaic as an official language. In a city like Palmyra, situated in the middle of the desert, several Greek-Aramaic bilingual texts testify to the impact of Graeco-Roman influence.

Generally, the single inscriptions yield the same patterns of social relationships as their Hatrene, Palmyrene and Nabataean counterparts. However, since they were discovered singly, they cannot be interpreted in a broader social context. In addition, many Latin samples appear to have been inspired by the so-called Emperor-cult. The employment of the formula in these instances distinguishes itself in that there is usually no actual social relationship between dedicator and beneficiary, *in casu* the Roman Emperor.

The present chapter aims to demonstrate that the incidental findings confirm our understanding of the meaning of the formula and the meaning of the nature of the social relationships it establishes. Where possible, the inscriptions will be discussed in chronological order.

The old Aramaic inscriptions

The oldest Aramaic inscription containing the formula *lḥyy* probably originates from Iran. It is attached to the rim of a bronze chalice that is dated to *c*.600 BC. Dupont-Sommer's reading (1964a: 115) was improved by Naveh (1966: 21). Scrutiny of the photograph and a drawing reproduced by Dupont-Sommer (1964a, pl.37), produces the following reading:

> *lz/pd/rʿ[ ] qrb ʾbʾṣr ksʾ znh lḥyy npšh*
>
> *Translation:* To (name of a deity) Abaser has offered this chalice for the life of himself.[1]

The dedication of this chalice is a votive-offering in the truest sense, involving only the dedicator and a divine recipient.

Another old Aramaic inscription containing the formula *lḥyy* appears on a small rectangular silver-plate measuring approximately 11 × 5 cm. It is inscribed around the representation of a fire-altar flanked by two birds, each of which faces the altar. According to Dupont-Sommer (1964b: 119ff) it originates from Iran and should be dated to the third century BC. On account of these characteristics, it may well have a Zoroastrian origin.

> *šqrtʾ zy ʿbd ḥnbndk wšbwr[ ]*
> *lgdy ʾlhʾ*
> *lḥywhy wlḥyy ʾḥwhy wdwdhy*

---

[1] The reading of the first characters is problematical, whereas *ktb* poses an interpretational problem. Naveh (1966: 22) solves it by suggesting that "he (the dedicator, KD) dedicated by the act of his writing". A close examination of Dupont-Sommer's photograph and drawing, however, shows the reading *ktb* to be doubtful, especially the first two characters. Instead of a "t" an "r" may be read, whereas the remaining traces of the first character allow for a "q". If so, then the pael of the verb *qrb*, *to offer*, is appropriate for the context. Naveh (1966: 22) reads *nbšh* instead of *npšh*. He asserts that *nbš* more often replaces *npš*. However, on Dupont-Sommer's (1964a: 116) drawing, the character in question does not resemble the "b" in *ʾbʾṣr* or *qrb* at all, but looks more like a "p".

> *Translation:* The fire-altar that Hanbandak and [ ] has made for Gaddai, the god, for the life of himself and the life of his brothers and his friends.[2]

The holes at the corners of the silver-plate suggest that it was attached to the object of dedication, perhaps to an altar as pictured on the plate (Naveh 1966: 34). If Naveh is correct, then all the components of a genuine *ʿl ḥyy*-inscription are present. The expected blessings of the votive-offering are directed to the dedicator himself and individuals that are related to him in terms of kinship and friendship.

A group of three inscriptions containing the formula originates from Taima, an oasis situated slightly north-east of Nabataean Hegra. Since the site additionally yielded a number of Nabataean inscriptions, it is assumed that it once was a Nabataean settlement. Different excavators date the inscriptions discussed here to around 400 BC. Their script is not Nabataean, but belongs to the types of Official Aramaic. The first, CIS II: 114, is engraved on a table of stone found in a construction identified as the castle of the governor of Taima (CIS II):

> *[m]ytbʾ zy qr*
> *[b] mʿnn br ʿm*
> *rn lṣlm ʾlh*
> *ʾ lḥyy npšh*[3]

> *Translation:* The podium which Maanan son of Imran has offered to the god Salm for the life of himself.

Again a votive-offering is concerned in which dedicator and beneficiary coincide.

---

[2] Cf. Dupont-Sommer (1964b: 122f) for the reading and interpretation. Dupont-Sommer (1964b: 127) asserts that "ces dédicaces ne mentionnent guère que les personnes de la famille". Therefore *dwdhy* should be translated as *his uncles*. However, the listing of uncles as beneficiaries is very rare, whereas at the end of such a list designations for one's friends are very common. For the meaning of *dd* as *paternal uncle* or *friend*: cf. Payne Smith (1903: 83). Another possibility is the reading *dwrhy*, *his house* or perhaps *his tribal group, the people that belong to him* (Dijkstra 1990: 83).

[3] Donner-Röllig (*KAI* II: 281) render *mytb* as "Sitz, Postament". In Syriac *mwtbʾ* denotes a *site*, *session* or *seat*, *throne* (Payne Smith 1903: 260). Usually it is translated as *throne*, a kind of socle particularly shaped for carrying a divine statue. Will (1986) has recently pointed out that from the archaeological context, it probably refers to a *podium* or *platform* as part of the cella in a particular type of temples. However, this does not alter its original purpose. Cf. Haussig (1965: 466) for the god Salm.

A similar inscription from Taima, engraved on a *stele*, has recently been published by Beyer and Livingstone (1987: 286ff):

[bbyr]t tymʾ
[h]qym pṣgw šhrw br[4]
[m]lky lḥyn hʿly by[t][5]
[ṣ]lm zy rb wmrḥbh w[6]
[h]qym krsʾʾ znh qdm
ṣlm zy rb lmytb šnglʾ
wʾšymʾ ʾlhy tymʾ
lḥyy npš pṣgw
šhrw wzrʿh mrʾ[nʾ]
[w]l[ḥ]yy npšh zy [lh][7]

Translation: [This in the city] of Taima has erected Pasgu Shahru, the delegate of Lihyan. He has raised the temple of Salm of Rab and its extension (?) and he has erected this throne before Salm of Rab as a podium of Shengalla and Ashima, the gods of Taima,

---

[4] Here *br* is not a genealogical term. It describes the dedicator as belonging to a particular group of officials delegated by the royal court of Lihyan. As such, it is inextricably attached to the following word *mlky*.

[5] Beyer and Livingstone translate: "der Sohn des königlichen Beamten von Lihyan, Haalay". In their comment they state that Haalay is a personal name. It is very unusual in Aramaic epigraphy, though, for a personal name to be listed after a title. Therefore, *hʿly* may be read as a verb, viz. haphel of *ʿl, to raise, to elevate*, which may be applied to (parts of) building constructions (Payne Smith 1903: 413f). Perhaps *byt ṣlm* which follows denotes the cella of the temple. In that case the dedicator made some adjustments to the place where the god Salm is supposed to have dwelt and in addition erected a throne for his companions Shengalla and Ashima. The verb *hqym* (l.2) may refer to the erection of the *stele*. Another possibility is that *hʿly* is a noun in the construct state. Then it might denote something like an *elevated house*, i.e. the first floor of a temple, as in H107. For the deities: cf. Beyer and Livingstone (1987: 287f).

[6] The exact meaning of *mrḥbh* is obscure. Beyer and Livingstone (1987: 287) suggest that it denotes the "Tempelbezirk".

[7] The restoration *lh* at the end of l.10 appears to be extraneous in the formulation of Beyer and Livingstone. They translate ll.8–10 as "für das Leben der Seele von Padigu Shahru und (für das Leben) seiner Nachkommenschaft, [der] Herren, [und] für das Leben ihrer eigenen Seele". If it is applied, then the suffix has to refer to *zrʿh* (l.9). But this is already mentioned among the beneficiaries of the first *lḥyy* (l.8). Why then should it be mentioned a second time? Since the *stele* is broken off beneath l.10, it is possible that the list of beneficiaries continued in a now missing part. Another possibility is that the suffix of *zrʿh* (l.9) does not refer to preceding *pṣgw šhrw*, but refers proleptically to *mrʾ[ ]*. Instead of *mrʾ[yʾ]*, then, the restoration *mrʾ[nʾ], our lord*, is more likely. In that case the restoration *lh* at the end of l.10 would be fitting if the suffix refers to *mrʾ[nʾ]* (l.9). The suffix of *npšh* (l.10) is again used proleptically. For another example of the proleptical use of suffixes: cf. next inscription.

> for the life of Pasgu Shahru and the offspring of our lord and for the life of him (i.e. our lord, KD).

Pasgu Shahru dedicates a number of objects to the 'triad of Taima' (Beyer and Livingstone 1987: 287). As a delegated official of the Lihyanite royal court his motive appears to be twofold. First of all, the dedication aims to commit the worshippers of the triad to him. Furthermore, as a royal representative he presents central Lihyanite power in a remote part of the realm. Not only does he act in his capacity as a delegated official, but he also lists his Lihyanite master and his offspring among the beneficiaries. In doing so, he simultaneously declares his loyalty. The fact that the king's offspring is mentioned as a beneficiary before the master himself only supplements this effect. The dedicator not only declares his loyalty to his master but even to those destined to succeed him. The 'reversed' order of beneficiaries moreover recalls the intents of Hatrene inscriptions, such as H139 (Drijvers 1982a: 183).

Another inscription from Taima is engraved on a stone (Beyer and Livingstone 1990: 1)

> *zy qrb tymw br ʾlhw*
> *ldrʿʾ lḥyy npšh*
> *wnpšhwm zy prqmnn[w]*
> *br wʿdw [w]krymw brh zy*
> *[pr]qḥyw*[8]
>
> *Translation:* (This it is) that Taimu son of Elahu has offered to Duraa for the life of himself and that of Parqumananu son of Waedu and Keraimu son of Parquhayyu.

---

[8] Note the proleptical use of the suffixes in *npšhwm* (1.3) and brh (1.4). Beyer and Livingstone (1990: 1) state that no name of a deity is mentioned. This is mainly due to their conception of the divine recipient (1.2). They read *drʿʾ* as a noun and believe it to describe something like the "(göttlichen schützenden) Arm". They refer to Biblical use of the word. Payne Smith (1903: 98) indeed lists it with the meaning of *arm* or *shoulder*. However, *drʿʾ* is a divine name analogous to Dushara, *dšrʾ*, or Duanat, *dʿnt*. It consists of the *nota relationis* plus a modification of the deity. As in Dushara and Duanat, this may be a territorial qualification. It is also possible that *rʿʾ* should be derived from the verb *rʿʾ*, *to pasture*, *to graze*, *to feed*. It should be translated then as *He who pastures*. This may indicate the pastoral mode of life of his worshippers. However, the pael of *rʿʾ* has the meaning *to please*, *to appease*, *to reconcile* (Payne Smith 1903: 545). In that case *drʿʾ* may be a manifestation of a healer-god or perhaps a peace-maker, possibly between different tribal groups.

Next to himself, the dedicator lists two other persons as beneficiaries who, at first sight, are not related to him in terms of kinship. All three have a different parentage. It is possible, though, that they are distant relatives, possibly cousins or even just members of the same tribal group. Since none of them bears a title, it is unlikely that the relationship between dedicator and beneficiaries is governed by the mechanisms of patronage, although it remains possible. It is obvious that Taimu intends to reinforce his relationship with Parqumananu and Keraimu.[9]

In summary, the old and Official Aramaic inscriptions already yield, besides the dedicator himself, both categories of beneficiaries. In some they are related to the dedicator in terms of kinship or friendship (Naveh 1966: 34; Beyer and Livingstone 1990: 1); in another the relationship is described in terms reminiscent of a patron-client bond (Beyer and Livingstone 1987: 286).

Ashur

A perplexing Aramaic inscription originates from Ashur (Aggoula 1985b: 27). It is dated to 324 Seleucid Era (= 13 AD) and appears next to a relief representing a standing human being. He is depicted *en profil* lifting his right hand into a gesture of prayer and holding in his left a palm-branch. A piece of cloth is fastened to the branch. The text is inscribed left of the person's head:

šnt 30[0 +]
20 + 4 ṣl[m]ʾ dy
rḥtʾsr br
bnbwʾḥdyt
dy ḥdt lh ʾšṭt
ʿl ḥyyhy wḥyʾ
ʿyny brh

Translation: In the year 324. The image of Rahatassur son of Benabuahdeit that Ashtat has consecrated for him for the life of himself and the life of Ainei his son.

---

[9] Taima has yielded one more badly damaged inscription that probably contains the formula *ʿl ḥyy* (Segal 1969: 170ff; Degen 1974: 84ff). Its reading, however, is a much debated issue. Since its remains do not affect our frame of interpretation, it has not been discussed. As in other instances, the beneficiaries seem to be related to the dedicator in terms of kinship.

The text is puzzling since it is hard to decide to whom the suffixes in ll.6–7 refer. They may refer to the dedicator, Ashtat, but could just as well refer to Rahatassur whose image is represented. Unfortunately, neither of them bears a title indicating a particular social status or describing them as the holder of a particular office. If such titles were present, they might have been relevant for determining the nature of the social relationship between the person represented and the dedicator, which in turn might elucidate the problem of the suffixes. However, since Rahatassur's image is consecrated, it is likely that Ashtat depends on him. Similar cases in both Palmyra and Hatra always show that the dedicator depends on the person represented. From this point of view, it would only be natural for the suffixes in ll.6–7 to refer to Rahatassur in order to enhance Ashtat's act of dedication. Similarly, CIS II: 4000 from Palmyra has a freed slave dedicating a small incense-burner to the 'Anonymous God' *for the life of* his former master and the latter's son. An important difference, though, lies in the object of dedication being an altar; not the image of the person intended to benefit from the act of dedication.

In Palmyra statues representing human beings are always erected with an accompanying inscription containing the formula *in honour of*, whereas in Hatra they may be the objects of dedication in inscriptions containing the formula *ʿl ḥyy*. However, on these occasions the person represented is never a beneficiary as well. Presumably, then, the suffixes in ll.6–7 refer to the dedicator. If the person represented is a priest, then the object of dedication is appropriate. Despite the fact that a divine recipient is not explicitly mentioned, it probably was understood since the image was found *in situ* in the southern gate of the court of the temple of the god Ashur.

Edessa and Sumatar Harabesi

Three more *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions originate from Edessa and Sumatar Harabesi, situated approximately 60 km south-east of Edessa. Their dates range from the middle of the second century AD to the beginning of the third century AD. Like that of Palmyra, Hatra and the cities of the Nabataean Empire, Edessene society and culture was marked by the close interaction between city-dwellers and desert-dwellers. Due to its position on the fringe of the Syrian-Mesopotamian steppe, a variety of cultural strands synthesized in an almost inextricable knot of Semitic, Roman, Greek and Arabic traditions to form a typical Graeco-Roman city in the Ancient Near-East (Drijvers 1980: 1ff).

Edessa was founded by Seleukos Nicator I in 302 BC, but very little is known of its earliest history. From the middle of the second century BC onwards, the city appears to have been inundated by Arabs from the desert. Consequently, an Arab dynasty managed to gain supreme power over the city and its immediate surroundings (Drijvers 1977: 867ff). The subsequent members of this dynasty succeeded in establishing a certain independence which was viable until the beginning of the third century AD. In 213 AD when Edessa was transformed into a Roman *colonia*, the dynasty prolonged its rule as puppets of Rome. However, the successor of Abgar VIII, the Great, who died in 212 AD, seems never to have changed his title of 'Crown Prince' for that of 'king'. Instead he was honoured as a *consularis* which conveys the rank of a Roman governor. Around 240 AD, the last member of the dynasty was granted the privilege to bear the title 'king' once again, but by 242 AD he had disappeared from the scene, probably when the political aspirations of the dynasty ceased (Teixidor 1988: 221).

From the middle of the first century BC onwards Edessa was, due to its strategic geographical position, an important buffer-zone between the rising stars of Rome and Parthia (Drijvers 1977: 869). To maintain independence under these conditions throughout the majority of its reign was a major political effort on the part of the Edessene dynasty. Its rulers had to be constantly aware of the impact of political developments in both the Roman and the Parthian Empire in order to join, if necessary, the more powerful to survive.

Sumatar Harabesi is known as a cult-site for worshipping the moon-god Sin (Segal 1953; Drijvers 1980: 122ff). The site, dominated by a central mount, has yielded on its northern slopes some reliefs accompanied by inscriptions. Three of them are dated to 476 Seleucid Era (= 165 AD). This, as demonstrated by Drijvers (1980: 132ff), was a hectic year in Edessene history for in the years prior to it, the legitimate ruler, the pro-Roman Maanu VIII, had been replaced by a pro-Parthian puppet, Wael son of Sahru. In 165 AD the Romans recaptured the city and reinstalled Maanu.

The dedicator mentioned in the following inscription, engraved in the rock of the summit of the central mount (Drijvers 1972: 16), probably is a partisan and close associate of Wael (Drijvers 1980: 133):

> *byrḥ šbṭ šnt 476*
> *ʾnʾ tyrdt br ʾdwnʾ šlyṭʾ dʿrb*
> *bnyt ʿltʾ hdʾ wšmt nṣbtʾ lmrlhʾ*[10]
> *ʿl ḥyy mry mlkʾ wbnwhy wʿl ḥyy ʾdwnʾ*
> *ʾby wʿl ḥyy dyly wdʾḥy wdbnyn*
>
> *Translation:* In the month Shebat of the year 476 (= February 165 AD). I, Tiridates son of Adona, ruler of Arab, have built this altar and set up a *baetyl* for Marelahe for the life of my lord, the king, and his sons and for the life of Adona, my father, and for the life of myself and my brothers and our sons.

The dedicator describes himself as *ruler of Arab, šlyṭʾ dʿrb.* Yet, simultaneously he addresses the king as *my lord.* Thus, the holder of the title 'ruler of Arab' must be subordinate to a king. Although the latter is not qualified, he probably is the king of Edessa (Drijvers 1980: 125). The position of the 'ruler of Arab' may have resembled that of the 'major-domo of Arab' in Hatra. The titles appear almost simultaneously in history, but it is unlikely that they denote one and the same office. Those who held the title, both in Edessa and Hatra, did not rule a large territory indicated as 'Arabia'. Rather, their jurisdiction was restricted to the immediate surroundings of the respective cities. There may even have been more 'rulers of Arab' that we do not know of yet. The term *ʿrb* designates the steppe or desert in general. It describes more a quality of the territory controlled by the city than the territory itself. Usually, the inhabitants of the steppe were pastoral nomads. For a city it was important to control its immediate surroundings, at least to assure itself of the loyalty of the dwellers. The task of the 'ruler of Arab' or the 'major-domo of Arab' was to effect this and to maintain the *status quo* (Dijkstra 1990: 95ff).

If it is true that king Wael and Tiridates were partisans, then this dedication has a very bizarre twist. Since the first beneficiaries are *my lord, the king, and his sons*, it has to be assumed that kingship was still incumbent on Wael. Hence, the dedication is a weapon in the hands of the pro-Parthian party. In order to support their cause Tiridates evokes the 'Lord of the gods' for the benefit of the royal house, himself and his immediate kin, all of whom obviously partisans of the king. Certainly, it is an expression of loyalty, perhaps aiming at rallying tribal groups frequenting Sumatar to their support.

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[10] Cf. Drijvers (1980: 125) for the interpretation of *nṣbtʾ*.

Two other inscriptions which were also found at the summit of the central mount mention descendants of a certain Adona. One of them incites the remembrance of *Absimia son of Adona before Marelahe* as well as that of Babas and Tiridates, his sons (Drijvers 1972: 13). Unfortunately, it is undated. Its provenance and the fact that Tiridates appears as a personal name of a descendant of Absimia, suggests that Adona should be identified with the father of Tiridates. Another son of Adona by the name of Manish is presented in Drijvers (1972: 18). Probably, Adona had three sons who all were involved in Edessene public life: Absimia as a *military commander*, *nwhdrʾ*; Tiridates as *ruler of Arab*, *šlyṭʾ dʿrb*; and Manish possibly as an officiant in the cult of Marelahe (Drijvers 1972: 18). They, their father and their sons are the beneficiaries.

In this context, it is worth citing the opening lines of Drijvers (1972: 18):

> *bšbṭ šnt 476 byrḥ*
> *ʾnʾ mnyš br ʾdwnʾ wmʿnʾ wʾlkwd*
> *wblbnʾ wʾlkwd ʾḥwhy*
> *šmn nṣbtʾ hdʾ bhnʾ ṭwrʾ*
> *brykʾ . . .*
>
> *Translation:* In the month Shebat of the year 476 (= February 165 AD), I Manish son of Adona and Maana and Elkud and Bolbana and Elkud his brethren, we set up this *baetyl* on this blessed mount . . .

The religious aspects of this text are extensively dealt with by Drijvers (1980: 126ff). It records the dedication of a number of objects, but the formula *ʿl ḥyy* is lacking. In these opening lines, however, three features are striking. Firstly, of the dedicators only Manish is described as *son of Adona*. The rest are listed by name unaccompanied by patronym. Secondly, the name 'Elkud' occurs twice. Finally, the other dedicators are indicated as *his brethren*. Surely, if all the dedicators were sons of Adona, then their names would have been listed, followed by the designation 'sons of Adona', *bny ʾdwnʾ*. Furthermore, if they all were sons of Adona, then it is odd that two of them bear the name Elkud. Apparently, only Manish is a son of Adona, despite the four other dedicators being described as *his breth-*

ren. Once again the problem is to whom the suffix of *ʾḥwhy* (l.3) refers. At first both Manish and his father are serious candidates. On second thoughts, however, Manish may be dropped. The text is drafted in the first person singular (l.2), then replaced by the first person plural (l.4). If the suffix intends to describe the co-dedicators as his brothers then the first person singular may have been more appropriate than the third person singular. Therefore, it has to refer to Adona (l.2). *ʾḥwhy* may be a classificatory term instead of a descriptive one—as suggested by Drijvers (1980: 126) in translating *his brethren* instead of *his brothers*—. Then, the co-dedicators either belong to the same tribal group as Adona or they belong, together with Adona, to a particular association, perhaps a cult-association. It is unlikely that the co-dedicators are Manish' uncles. However, this cannot entirely be precluded. Thus, Manish, assuming the initiative for the dedication, begins by describing himself as *I Manish son of Adona* (l.2) and continues in the first person plural (l.4). What he and his co-dedicators have in common is their relationship with Adona, his father. The possibility that *his brethren* refers to Adona's tribal group should also be dropped, because Manish would belong to it too. Consequently, there is no impediment for indicating his co-dedicators as '*my* brethren'. The relationship between the individual dedicators must be established via Adona before it is allowed to proceed in the first person plural. The important role of Manish as the initiator is explained by the involvement of his brother Tiridates. On the other hand, Manish may have been an official of the cult-site.

The prominent position of Tiridates and his brothers is confirmed by another *ʿl ḥyy*-inscription which is engraved, next to the relief of a bust, which was found on the northern flank of the central mount (Drijvers 1972: 10; 1980: 123):

[br syl]ʾ[11]
ʿbd sylʾ ṣlmʾ
lsyn ʾlhʾ ʿl ḥyy
tyrdt br ʾdwnʾ wʿl ḥyy
ʾḥwhy

Translation: Sila son of Sila has made the image for the god Sin for the life of Tiridates son of Adona and for the life of his brothers.

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[11] If Drijvers' (1972: 10) restoration is correct, then l.1 describes Sila (l.2) as the son of Sila. Perhaps the parentage was initially forgotten and added supralinear afterwards.

The inscription identifies the bust, the object of dedication, as an image of the god Sin (Drijvers 1980: 123). Sila put it there in order to reinforce or to establish his relationship with *Tiridates and his brothers*. In this inscription, the suffix of *ʾḥwhy* does not refer to the dedicator but, from the analysis of Tiridates' familial relationships above, Absimia and Manish must be meant. As there is no explicit kinship-relation between dedicator and beneficiaries, the former probably depends on the latter. In view of the political events, Sila son of Sila may have intended to express his loyalty to Tiridates and consequently should be ranked among the pro-Parthian party.

The third Edessene *ʿl ḥyy*-inscription is unique for it appears in a funerary mosaic found in a *hypogeum* north of the city-centre. It portrays the busts of five people, each of which is identified by an inscription. There is no doubt that the dedicator, his father, his mother and his brother are represented together with someone called *Abgar son of Maanu*. The latter is dominant iconographically, from looking at the photograph, and must have been an important person. The busts surround the dedicatory inscription. The mosaic has only recently been discovered and was published with a clear photograph by Drijvers (1981).[12]

ʾnʾ brsmyʾ br
ʾšdw ʿbdt ly
byt ʿlmʾ hnʾ
ly wlbny wlḥy
ʿl ḥyy ʾbgr
mry wʿbdṭbty

Translation: I Barsimia son of Ashdu have made this house of eternity for myself and my sons and my brother for the life of Abgar, my lord and benefactor.

On epigraphical, stylistic and iconographical grounds Drijvers (1982a: 167, 179) dates it to the end of the second or beginning of the third century AD. The iconographical argument that Abgar son of Maanu is to be identified with king Abgar VIII the Great, who reigned between 177 AD and 212 AD, is contested by Segal (1983: 107ff). His main objection is that unlike the representations of Abgar on coins, he does not wear full royal dress, i.e. sceptre as well as tiara and diadem. Instead he wears a phrygian bonnet like the dedicator and his father. However, the validity of Segal's comparison of the different representations may be questioned on the basis that the context and function of coins is quite different from that of a funerary mosaic. The former being always public thus requires the representation of the reigning monarch complete with the distinguishing attributes of office. The latter is public only to a limited extent since the construction of a tomb is primarily a private matter. Whilst Segal recognizes that three out of the five persons represented wear phrygian bonnets, he fails to observe its full implications. He suggests correctly that it pictures Abgar and the dedicator and his father as being of almost equal status. He also recognizes that the fact that Abgar's bonnet turns to the left—whereas those of the others turn to the right—may be a distinguishing mark like his wearing of a more sophisticated cloak. Segal (1983: 107) argues that these differences are meant "to indicate that he is not a member of Barsimya's family". The wearing of the phrygian bonnet, however, is demanded by the occasion, perhaps the consecration of the tomb. The turning to the left of Abgar's bonnet does indeed distinguish him from the others, but mainly in order to indicate his royal status. Within the framework of the occasion every opportunity is seized to distinguish Abgar from the others. After all, if the wearing of tiara and diadem is considered to be inappropriate, then the only royal *insignum* left is the sceptre. The wearing of the phrygian bonnet by the dedicator, his father and Abgar may reflect that they entertained a close social relationship which was not shared by the other persons represented (Drijvers 1982a: 177f). Similarly, the object in Barsimia's hand, which possibly is a sealing ring, may indicate his status in the same way as the sceptre signifies Abgar's (Drijvers 1982a: 178).

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[12] The inscription is commented upon at length by Drijvers (1982a).

Segal is correct in his assertion that both Abgar and Maanu are very common names in Edessene onomastics and, consequently the person represented may not at all be king Abgar VIII the Great. However, it would be coincidental that two persons are contemporary who derive from totally different origins, bear the same name, have the same parentage and moreover belong to the civic élite. Surely, a distinction would have been made to avoid misunderstandings, e.g. by adding a generation in the respective genealogies. Of course, it might be objected that if king Abgar VIII indeed is concerned, then the employment of his title would be an appropriate means to this end. However, Abgar does not act here as a king, but as a personal patron and benefactor.

Segal (1983: 109) is once more correct in contesting Drijvers' assertion that Abgar's titles do not necessarily depict him as someone of royal rank and status, although it is conspicuous that they frequently appear as such. In a society permeated with the mechanisms of patronage and euergetism, all status and wealth is eventually derived from the rulers. They bestow privileges. What Saller (1982) has demonstrated to be operative in the Roman Empire at large, is reproduced on a small scale. All patron-client bonds eventually emanate from the Emperor. In order to secure his status, a local ruler has to imitate the Emperor and in doing so he automatically earns or assumes epithets such as 'lord' and 'benefactor'. Nevertheless, Abgar is described explicitly as *my* lord and *my* benefactor. The personal patron-client bond between Abgar and Barsimia is important. Consequently, Abgar is represented in his capacity as a patron, not that as a king. Barsimia probably owed his social position to his favour. This relationship corresponds well with the private character of a tomb. Although some of Segal's objections against the identification of Abgar son of Maanu with king Abgar VIII the Great are justified, it still accounts best for most of the peculiarities of the representation.

The inscription explicitly states that the dedicator built the tomb *for himself and for his sons and for his brother*. They were supposed to be buried in it as possibly were also his parents. Despite their appearance in the mosaic, the inscription does not mention them as beneficiaries in this respect. Abgar certainly was not buried here.

In comparison with other *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions two features emerge. Firstly, a tomb has never otherwise acted as an object of dedication. Secondly, a divine recipient is absent with the consequence that the religious connotations of the formula are reduced. Further weight is lent by the private character of a tomb. The potential readers of the text are restricted to Barsimia's close relatives and his offspring. In listing Abgar as a beneficiary after the formula *ʿl ḥyy*, it is suggested that Barsimia is his dependant, which is enhanced by the description of Abgar as *his* lord and benefactor. It appears that Barsimia is trying to communicate that the construction of the tomb should not be added to his credit but to that of Abgar. The connotations of the formula remind of those of the formulae *in honour of*, *lyqr*, and *be remembered*, *dkyr*.

Dura-Europos

Dura became a Macedonian foundation around 300 BC, from which time it was known as Europos, after the Macedonian town. It was destined to lodge veterans.[13] Much of its history before the turn of the Era is obscure. However, from 114 BC onwards it was under Parthian control. With a short interruption in 115 AD when the Romans took hold briefly of the city during Trajan's campaign, the Parthians held sway until 165 AD. In that year the armies of Lucius Verus and Avidius Crassus marched against the Parthians and managed to conquer the city and to occupy it up to the Sassanian siege and pillaging in 256 AD (Welles 1951: 252ff).

During its 'Parthian' period, the city's administration was in the hands of the so-called στρατηγὸς καὶ ἐπιστάτης τῆς πόλεως. The office may have been hereditary. Since a city-council (βουλή) was not established until probably the end of the second century AD, i.e. well into 'Roman' times, its holder equalled a local sovereign who had a personal obligation to and who had to account for his administration to the Arsacid king of kings alone (Arnaud 1986: 144ff).[14] The organization of civic life, however, resembled more that in Greece than that which was usually found in the area. As it was neatly structured, it was exploited by the Arsacids (Welles 1951: 273; Arnaud 1986: 145). Concomitant with the Roman conquest in 165 AD, 'democratic' institutions seem to have been gradually introduced (Arnaud 1986: 148).

Economically, Dura-Europos prospered in the wake of Palmyra from the beginning of the first century AD onwards (Welles 1951: 253; Gawlikowski 1988: 169). In addition, it served as a political and religious centre for tribal groups roaming the desert, like other cities in the area. Yet it is remarkable that the major part of its epigraphical legacy, especially monumental inscriptions, are drafted in Greek. Most of the Palmyrene as well as a few other Aramaic inscriptions found in Dura are only short memento-texts (du Mesnil du Buisson 1939). In order to explain this peculiar phenomenon, Welles (1970: 53f) suggests that the Macedonian immigrants managed to retain their hold on administration, politics and the military. Thus, they comprised an administrative and military class, whereas the indigenous population of Aramaean and Arabic stock rendered a variety of economic services. Consequently, Greek became the language for official purposes, both in administrative affairs, as the large amount of parchments and legal documents attest, as well as the epigraphical language, evident in the range of dedicatory inscriptions. Whatever language was spoken, Greek dominated on official occasions and much of the indigenous population learned to read and write it.

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[13] This conception of the founding and destiny of the city has recently been challenged by Will (1988). However, although Will makes some serious reservations, he does not provide a decisive alternative.

[14] In fact, he was a royal functionary who paid his respect to the Arsacid king of kings. Arnaud (1986: 147) holds that this dynastic family was thoroughly emersed in Iranian traditions and played a prominent role in the indigenous cults of Aphlad and Mithras. Teixidor (1987: 191) recognizes that for some time the office was held by members of one family, but questions whether it was hereditary. He assures, though, that "the strategos was a sheikh or tribal chief whose authority would have been recognized, and used, by the Parthians". Cf. for a similar assessment of Seleucid rule in Babylonia: Sherwin-White (1983: 159).

Welles (1951: 263ff) has also observed that the quantity of Semitic names in Greek records from before 180 AD is relatively restricted in comparison with that in later documents. He infers that the Macedonian aristocracy managed to maintain control of city-life well after the Roman occupation in 165 AD, but that it was gradually replaced by individuals favourable to Roman authority (Welles 1951: 273). Simultaneously, the nature of Semitic onomastics decisively changes after 180 AD (Welles 1951: 267). Welles concludes that concomitant with the Roman conquest an influx of hitherto unknown tribal groups inundated the city; most of them probably served in the Roman army. In addition, from this date onwards, citizens began increasingly to designate themselves as 'Durenes' instead of 'Europeans' (Welles 1951: 272).

A quick survey of the genre of inscriptions which are the subject here, yields two Aramaic ones. One of them, the bilingual Hatrene-Greek inscription, has been dealt with at length in the previous chapter. The other is an undated Palmyrene text engraved on the margins of a relief representing the god Arsu. It was found in a vestibule of the temple of Zeus Megistos (du Mesnil du Buisson 1939: 28). The initial reading of du Mesnil du Buisson (1939: 29) was corrected by Frye e.a. (1955: 138f).

ʾrṣw wmṭyʾ ʿbd ʿgʾ glpʾ lḥy brh

Translation: Oge the sculptor has made Arsu the camel-rider for the life of his son.[15]

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[15] Cf. Frye e.a. (1955: 138f) for the interpretation of the relief and the inscription.

Arsu is a well-known warrior-god whose presence in Palmyra is well-attested (Teixidor 1979: 69ff). Represented by the relief, he presumably acts as the divine recipient. The relationship between dedicator and beneficiary is couched in terms of kinship, typical of the Palmyrene employment of the formula.

Most of the Greek inscriptions containing equivalents of Aramaic *ʿl ḥyy*, expressed as ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας and ὑπὲρ ὑγιείας, date from the first two centuries AD, especially from the 'Parthian' period. Only a few are dated after 165 AD. The Latin ones with the formula *pro salute* all date from the end of the second and the beginning of the third centuries AD. It is noteworthy, that the employment of the Greek formulae corresponds largely to Palmyrene practice. Almost without exception beneficiaries are related to the dedicator in terms of kinship. Since the employment of the Greek and Latin equivalents of Aramaic *ʿl ḥyy* resembles the use of the Aramaic formula in its Palmyrene and Hatrene context, the examples originating from Dura-Europos will be presented at length.

The oldest Greek inscription from Dura-Europos in this genre is dated to 3 AD. It was found in eight pieces in the temple of Artemis (*TEAD* III: 63):

> ἔτους διτʹ
> ἀνήγιρεν
> ʼΑβιδνήριγ[λος]
> Ζαβιδιλαίου
> ʼΑρτέμιδι καὶ
> ʼΑπόλλωνι ἀρ[16]
> χηγοῖς ὑπὲρ
> τῆς αἱαυτοῦ ὑγ
> ίας καὶ τέκνων
>
> *Translation:* Year 314 (= 3 AD). Abidnerglos son of Zabidilos has erected (this) to Artemis and Apollo, the founder gods, for the well-being of himself and (his) children.

The divine recipients evoke Greek religious traditions including the fact that Apollo was considered to be the founder of the Seleucid dynasty. Yet, the dedicator's name is Semitic. Probably, he identified Greek gods with Semitic ones. The text does not mention the object of dedication and it is also unknown whether the gypsum slab upon which the inscription was engraved, was attached to a particular object. Drill holes suggest that the slab originally belonged to a larger object (*TEAD* III: 63). The verb ἀνεγείρω indicates something that had been erected, perhaps a building or an altar.

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[16] As the reputed founder of the Seleucid dynasty, Apollo was frequently bestowed with the epithet ἀρχηγός. Here, his sister Artemis is included. Long after the Seleucid dynasty had disappeared, the tradition was still vigorously maintained (*TEAD* III: 64).

The same verb describes the erection of a number of φαλλοί by a certain Ammonios son of Apollophanes in 34 AD. This inscription is engraved upon a gypsum slab and was rubricated afterwards, as was the case with the majority of monumental inscriptions. It was found in the temple of Atargatis which is adjacent to the temple of Artemis (Frye e.a. 1955: 128f):

> fμτ´ Αμμώνιος[17]
> 'Απολλοφάνου
> ἀνήγειρεν το
> ὺς φάλλους ὑ
> πὲρ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ
> καὶ τέκνων σωτηρίας
>
> *Translation:* 346 (= 34/5 AD). Ammonios son of Apollophanes has erected the φαλλοί for the well-being of himself and (his) children.

Two years earlier, Ammonios probably erected an altar in the same temple. An inscription, likewise engraved upon a gypsum slab, was found near an altar (Cumont 1922–23: 427).

> ἔτους γμτ´
> 'Αμμώνιος
> 'Απολλοφάνου
> τοῦ Σελεύκου
> [ἀ]νήγειρεν ὑπέρ
> τε ἑαυτοῦ καὶ[18]
> Λυσανίου καὶ

---

[17] The first character of the date is the Greek "wau", which is used to indicate the number "6". The sign is here represented by the Roman character "f".

[18] If τε is genuinely a particle and not a scribal error for τῆς the accent in preceding ὑπέρ should change.

ἀδελφῶν σω
τηρίας

Translation: Year 343 (= 32 AD). Ammonios son of Apollophanes son of Seleukos has erected (this) for the well-being of himself and Lysanias and (his *or* their) brothers.

An inscription dated to 61 AD and another of 92 AD respectively mention a daughter of Ammonios and one of his grandsons.[19] Both these inscriptions were also found in the temple of Atargatis, indicating that his family showed a continuing interest in the affairs of the temple. They reveal, however, that Ammonios had a daughter, whose name is lost due to damage, and a son by the name of Seleukos. They act as beneficiaries, then, of the dedication of φαλλοί. His immediate offspring may have counted even more members. In addition, the inscription mentioning *Lysanias son of Seleukos son of Ammonios* as the dedicator of a particular part of the temple complete with its doors (*TEAD* III: 59), reveals that the name 'Lysanias' ran in the family.[20] The Lysanias listed as a beneficiary in Cumont's inscription may be a brother of Ammonios. Seleukos, Ammonios' son, may have named his son, Lysanias, after his uncle. For some reason Ammonios cited his brother Lysanias separately and continued to list their other brothers as an undifferentiated group.[21]

A slab of gypsum from the temple of Azzanathkona has the following text (*TEAD* V: 177):

ἔτους εμτʹ
Ὑπερβερεταί[ου]
ἀνήγειρεν
Ῥεχιμναίος
Βουμαίου

---

[19] Cumont (1922–23: 428) and *TEAD* (III: 59). Another grandson, Xenokrates, may appear in *TEAD* (II: 92).

[20] Another member of this family may appear in a badly damaged inscription from the temple of Artemis dated to 119 AD. It mentions a certain Ἀμμώνιος [υ]ἱοῦ τοῦ [ ] (*TEAD* III: 65).

[21] The names 'Lysanias' and 'Seleukos' occur in the city's leading family that provided the στρατηγὸς καὶ ἐπιστάτης τῆς πόλεως (Frye e.a. 1955: 140f). It is unclear whether this family can be linked with that of Ammonios and if so, in what way. Since neither Seleukos nor Lysanias bears a title in Ammonios' dedication, it is unlikely that they are directly related to the ruler of Dura, although it is possible that they belong to the same clan.

ὑπὲρ τῆς ἑ
αυτοῦ καὶ τ
έκνων σ
ωτηρίας
'Αζζανα[θ]
κονα

Translation: In the month Hyperberetaios of the year 345 (= 34 AD). Rechimnaios son of Boumaios has erected (this) for the well-being of himself and (his) children to Azzanathkona.

Or: In the month Hyperberetaios of the year 345. Rechimnaios son of Boumaios has erected Azzanathkona for the well-being of himself and (his) children.[22]

Both the divine recipient and the dedicator bear Semitic names.

The temple of Bel, formerly indicated as the 'temple of the Palmyrene gods', is located at the northwest angle of the city-wall (Welles 1970: 63). In the central court-yard an inscription was found on a slab of gypsum dated to 52 AD (*TEAD* II: 92):

ἔτους γξτ'
Διὶ Σωτῆρι ἀνή
γειρεν Ξενο
κράτης Σελεύκου
τοῦ 'Αμμωνίου ὑπὲ[ρ]
τῆς Σελεύκου τοῦ Λ[υ]
σίου τοῦ Σελεύκου στ[ρα]
τηγοῦ κ[αὶ ἐπιστ]άτου
τῆς πόλεως [σωτηρίας]
η[τ]
οἷς ἰδίοις ἀνα[λώμασιν]
[ ]

Translation: Year 363 (= 52 AD). Xenokrates son of Seleukos son of Ammonios has erected (this) to Zeus Soter for the well-being of Seleukos son of Lysias son of Seleukos, the commander and governor of the city, [ ] from his own resources [ ]

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[22] Cf. *TEAD* (V: 177f) and the references therein for a detailed commentary. The excavators believe that Azzanathkona is the divine recipient. However, the name does not follow the usual rules of inflexion making it possible that an accusative should be

The dedicator may be another grandson of Ammonios son of Apollophanes, who some twenty years previously had dedicated a number of φαλλοί and, probably, an altar to Atargatis. Although the use of the verb ἀνεγείρω suggests the object of dedication to be (part of) a building or an altar or something similar, no clue has been found to substantiate either of these options. Welles (1970: 63) suggests that the deity designated as Zeus really is Palmyrene Bel. If this is the case, then he manifests himself in an extraordinary manner, i.e. as a god who bestows and deserves to receive recompense. The nature of the social relationship between dedicator and beneficiary is hard to define exactly. Obviously the former in one way or another is dependent on the latter, who is the ruler of the city. It has been confirmed that Ammonios' family was not directly related to the city's leading family. If they had been, then dedicator and beneficiary would have been related in terms of kinship. Moreover, despite the occurrence of the same name in the respective genealogies, that of both of them is presented. An unusual procedure when members of the same family are concerned.

Aside from the dedicators and their children, the ruler of the city, the same Seleukos son of Lysias son of Seleukos, is listed as the prime beneficiary in an inscription from the temple of Aphlad. The text is engraved on a gypsum slab and is dated to 54 AD (*TEAD* V: 113ff):

> ἔτους εξτ′ Γορπι
> αίου κ′ οἱ ὑπογεγραμ
> μένοι ἀπὸ τῆς ἑταιρείας
> ἀνήγειραν τὸν ἀνδρῶνα
> τοῦτον 'Απαλαδῶι θεῶι
> Βαριβαγναῖος ῾Ραχιμναίου
> Ναβουσάμδος 'Αβεμμου Σαβδι
> σάμσος Ζαβδιβωλου Ναβουδάραος
> Φαλαζζαχεις 'Αβουις Ζαβιδαδαδου
> Σαλαμις Φαλαζαχεις ῾Ρούμης 'Οχχανου
> Ναβουαζζανης ῾Ραχιμναίου Θεο
> γενης Ζαβιδαδαδου 'Αδαδιαδβος
> Ζαβδιβωλου 'Αδδαιος Φαλαζαχεις
> ὑπὲρ τῆς Σελεύκου στρατη

---

read. In that case, the dedicator erected the cult-statue or cult-relief of the goddess, who nevertheless may act simultaneously as the divine recipient.

γοῦ καὶ ἑαυτῶν καὶ
τέκνων σωτηρίας

Translation: On the twentieth of the month Gorpiaios of the year 365 (= 54 AD). The undermentioned from the association have erected this shrine for the god Aphlad: Baribagnaios son of Rachimnaios, Nabusambdos son of Abemmes, Sabdisamsos son of Zabdibolos, Nabudaraos son of Phalazzacheis, Abouis son of Zabidadados, Salamis son of Phalazacheis, Roumes son of Ochanos, Nabuazzanes son of Rachimnaios, Theogenes son of Zabidadados, Hadadiadbos son of Zabdibolos, Haddaios son of Phalazacheis, for the well-being of Seleukos, the commander, and themselves and (their) children.[23]

The excavators point out that ἀνδρών denotes the temple depicted in the relief which was found directly beside the slab with the inscription (*TEAD* V: 114). Apparently, the sanctuary was founded by an association or part of it. In the next inscription which is cited, the god Aphlad is said to originate from Anath, a village on the Euphrates. Therefore, it is not surprising that, excepting Theogenes, all the dedicators, including their parents, have Semitic names. The excavators suggest that Theogenes may be the Greek rendering of a Semitic name. The inscription is unique, in that for the first time in the scope of the present study, an association consisting of members from different families explicitly acts as a dedicator. The eleven members listed belong to six families (*TEAD* V: 114). It is conspicuous that Seleukos—if he indeed is the ruler of the city and not a mere general—is not indicated with his full title. The personal relationship between him and each member of the association is unimportant here, not so that between him and the association. As the ruler of the city he may have acted as a patron of the association and may have stimulated the building of the temple in order to commit the worshippers of Aphlad to himself. They, like the god, probaly originate from Anath on the Euphrates. Since the dedicators belong to six different families, Seleukos may have anticipated winning the favour of a number of tribal groups by approving and supporting their building-activities.

Directly beside the slab of gypsum recording the dedication of the association, a relief was found portraying the god Aphlad.[24] It pictures the god standing on two griffins, whilst the dedicator is standing beside an altar. As the temple was dedicated in 54 AD, the excavators date the relief to the middle of the first century AD. The dedicator of the relief is listed among the members of the association. It is accompanied by the following inscription (*TEAD* V: 112f):

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[23] Cf. for the translation of ὑπογεγραμμένοι: Versnel (1991: 88, note 135).

[24] A full description of this relief as well as a photograph is found in *TEAD* (V: 106ff; pl.XIII).

τὴν ἀφείδρυσιν[25]
ταύτη[ν] ἱεροῦ ʼΑφλαδ
λεγομένου θεοῦ
τῆς ʼΑναθ κώμης
Εὐφράτου ἀνέθηκεν
ʼΑδαδιαβος
Ζαβδιβωλου τοῦ
Σιλλοι εὐχὴν
ὑπὲρ τῆς
σωτηρίας
αὐτοῦ
καὶ τέκνων
καὶ τοῦ πα[ν]τὸς
οἴκου

> *Translation:* This relief of the temple of Aphlad, who is called the god of Anath, a village upon Euphrates, has dedicated Hadadiabos son of Zabdibolos son of Silloi as a votive gift for the well-being of himself and (his) children and (his) entire house.

The beneficiaries are a well-known triad, especially in Palmyra. Hadadiabos, the dedicator, does not act as a member of the association but as a *pater familias*, perhaps even as a patron. The explicit statement that the object of dedication should be considered as a votive gift is remarkable. However, it is obscure whether it is the redemption of a vow or whether it supports the vow. If the former applies, then the vow did not only concern Hadadiabos, but his children and his 'house' as well. Or the dedicator might value his dedication to be sufficient to claim simultaneously the god's favour for the future benefit of his children and his 'house'.[26] If the latter applies, then the dedication reinforces his ties with those immediately related to and depending on him. It is unusual, though, that a dedication *for the life/ well-being of* is explicitly designated as the redemption of a vow.

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[25] This word obviously denotes the relief. The verb ἀφιδρύω means *to erect*, *to set apart*, *to move* (Liddell and Scott 1879: 289). ἀφίδρυσις equals ἀφίδρυμα: cf. Robert (1965), idem (1977: 109 and 126) and Manganaro (1985).

[26] Cf. Chapter 3: Minor dedications, p. 120.

An inscription from the Mithraeum reports the erection of a shrine of an unnamed deity. The *stele* carrying the inscription had been reused. On the reverse side, another inscription was found that presents the dedicator's son as a dedicator restoring and enlarging the building after Trajan's troops pillaged its doors in 116 AD. From this datum the excavators assign the first text to *c*.85 AD (*TEAD* VII/VIII: 129):

> ἀνήγε[ι]ρε[ν] ’Επί
> νικος κῆρυξ
> καὶ ἱερεὺς τοῦ
> θεοῦ τὸν ναὸν
> τοῦτο θεῶι[27]
> ὑπὲρ τῆς ἑαυ
> τοῦ καὶ τέκ
> νων σωτηρίας
> καὶ ζωγραφήσας
> εἰκόνας
>
> *Translation:* Epinikos, herald and priest of the god, has erected this shrine for the god for the well-being of himself and (his) children. Also he had the images painted.

The following text is inscribed on a slab of gypsum found in the temple of Atargatis (*TEAD* III: 61):

> ἔτους δυ′
> ’Ολώιου γ′
> ἀνήγειρεν
> Νικάνωρ Διο
> νυσίου τόνδε
> τὸν οἶκον[28]
> καὶ τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ
> ταμιεῖον πρό[29]

---

[27] Instead of τοῦτο read τοῦτον.

[28] In this context οἶκος designates a particular structure as a room or a hall or something like that within the sanctuary. Cf. also *TEAD* (VII/VIII: 168f) and *TEAD* (V: 142) below.

[29] The precise meaning of ταμιεῖον here is obscure. The dictionary gives as possible meanings: *storeroom*, *treasury*, and *inner room* (Liddell and Scott 1879: 1754). The use

ς εὐκοσμίαν
τοῦ ἱεροῦ τῆς
'Αταργάτειος θε
ᾶς ὑπὲρ τῆς ἑαυ
τοῦ γυναικὸς καὶ
τέκνων σωτηρί
ας τύχῃ ἀγαθῇ

Translation: On the third of the month Oloios of the year 404 (= 93 AD). Nikanor son of Dionysios has erected this room and the cult-bank (?) in it as an adornment of the shrine of the goddess Atargatis for the well-being of his wife and (his/their) children. Good fortune.

A lintel of a *pronaos* in the sanctuary of Adonis bears the following damaged inscription. Apart from the date, it informs that Atargatis probably acted as a divine recipient and that the beneficiaries comprise the dedicator's wife and his children (*TEAD* VII/VIII: 167f):

ἔτους γξυ' Πανήμου [ ] ὑπὲρ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ γυναικὸς καὶ τέκνων
σωτηρίας 'Αταρ[γάτιδι]

Translation: In the month Panemos of the year 463 (= 152 AD) [ ] for the well-being of his wife and (his/their) children to Atar[gatis].

In another *pronaos* in the same sanctuary a gypsum slab was found, that presumably was orginially fastened above the lintel (*TEAD* VII/VIII: 168f):

ἔτους δξυ' Πανήμου
ἀνηγείρεντες τὸν οἶκον
'Αβεμμῆλος Σαλαμγ
Βαρναῖος Βηλακάβου
Βαρναῖος Βααθαίου
Βαρναναῖος Βαφαλαδάδου
Μημαρναῖος 'Αβιδνηρ

---

of cult-banks is well-known in Hatra (Downey 1966). It is conceivable that Nikanor dedicated a type of safe to store valuable cultic utensils.

> 'Ρονναῖος Βαργάτους
> Σήτταβος Βαργάτους
> Δαδδᾶς Γόρου
> ὑπὲρ τῆς ἁπάντων
> καὶ τέκνων σωτη
> ρίας κατ' εὐχήν
>
> *Translation:* In the month Panemos of the year 464 (= 153 AD). Abemmelos son of Salamg, Barnaios son of Belakabos, Barnaios son of Baathaios, Barnanaios son of Baphaladados, Memarnaios son of Abidner, Ronnaios son of Bargates, Settabos son of Bargates, Daddas son of Goros have erected the room for the well-being of all of them and (their) children as a votive gift.

As in *TEAD* (V: 114) the dedicating agency is an association or confraternity. Two of its members display the same patronym and thus are brothers. The dual occurrence of the name Βαρναῖος in addition to the derivation Βαρναναῖος is noteworthy. Since papponymy was a widespread phenomenon, it may imply that the dedicators belong to one tribal group. Moreover, all three names have the goddess Nanaia as a theophoric element and tribal groups often entertain a special relationship with a deity whom they consider to be their tutelary god. All the names are of Semitic origin. In contrast with *TEAD* (V: 114) all beneficiaries are related to the dedicators in terms of kinship. If the dedication redeems a vow previously made, then the employment of the formula ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας suggests that the dedicators plead for the continuing favour of the deity, irrespective of identity. As the previous inscription from the same sanctuary suggests, it need not necessarily be the patron-deity of the shrine.

In the doorway between two rooms in the temple of Azzanathkona the following inscription was found on a gypsum slab that presumably was originally placed above the lintel (*TEAD* V: 142):

> ἔτους γου′ Δίου
> Βαρναβους Ζα
> βιδκονου τοῦ
> 'Ραειβήλου ἀνήγει
> ρεν οἶκος ἐν τοῖς ['Αρτέμιδος][30]

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[30] Instead of οἶκος, οἶκον is expected here. The excavators suggest that by the repetition of the name, 'Αρτέμιδος was omitted (*TEAD* V: 143).

> Ἀρτέμιδι θε[ᾷ]
> καλουμένῃ Ἀζζαν
> α̣θκονᾳ ἐξ ἰδίων ἀ
> νηλωμάτων ὑπὲρ
> τῆς ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τέκ
> νων σωτηρίας
>
> *Translation:* In the month Dios of the year 473 (= 162 AD). Barnabous son of Zabdikonos son of Rhaeibelos has erected (this) room in the precincts of Artemis to Artemis, the goddess who is called Azzanathkona at his own expense for the well-being of himself and (his) children.[31]

The next inscription is engraved on a damaged gypsum slab found in the vicinity of the temple of Zeus Megistos (Frye e.a. 1955: 140):

> [ἔτους] απυ′ Ὑπερβερεταίου γ′
> Σ[έλε]υκος στρατηγὸς καὶ
> ἐπιστάτης τῆς πόλεως τ[ὴν]
> ψαλίδα καὶ τὴν στοὰν καὶ τὸ
> πλινθῖον τοῦτο Διὶ μεγίστῳ[32]
> ἀνοικοδόμησεν ὑπὲρ τῆς
> ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τέκνων σω
> τηρίας κατ᾽ εὐχήν
>
> *Translation:* On the third of the month Hyperberetaios of the year 480 (= 169 AD). Seleukos, the commander and governor of the city, has built this vault and this *stoa* as well as this door trim (?) for Zeus Megistos for the well-being of himself and (his) children as a votive gift.

The ruler of Dura-Europos is engaged in building-activities in the temple of Zeus Megistos. The structure of the text is similar to that of *TEAD* (VII/VIII: 168). If the dedicator acts on account of a vow, then he simultaneously expects the deity to continue his favourable attitude towards himself and his offspring.[33]

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[31] Greek Artemis is identified with indigenous Azzananthkona (Welles 1970: 58).

[32] Frye e.a. (1955: 140) proposes πλινθεῖον here as a stone door trim. Usually it means *brickworks* or *frame* (*of a panel*). Cf. also *TEAD* (VII/VIII: 169).

[33] Cf. Chapter 3: Minor dedications, p. 120.

Another inscribed gypsum slab was found in front of an altar in the temple of Adonis (*TEAD* VII/VIII: 169):

> ἔτους ὡς τὸ πρ[ότερον]
> fπυ΄ Γορπιαίου κ΄ ἀ[νήγει][34]
> ρεν Θαισάμσος Ἰαβσ[ύμσου]
> τοῦ ἐπικληθέντος Ἀ[ ]
> Ζαβιδάδου τόνδε [τὸν βω]
> μὸν Ἀδῶνι θεῷ ὑπὲρ τ[ῆς]
> ἑαυτοῦ καὶ Ἐκλαπᾶτο[ς]
> τῆς γυναικὸς αὐτοῦ
> σωτη[ρ]ίας κατ᾽ εὐχήν
> ἐφ᾽ ᾧ[ ]ι καρπῶσαι
> κατ᾽ αὐτὸ[ν] τῷ αὐτῷ
> θεῷ κατ᾽ ἐνιαυτὸν
>
> *Translation:* On the twentieth of the month Gorpiaios of the year 486 by the old reckoning (= 175 AD). Tai(m)samsos son of Yahbsumsos who is also called A[ ] son of Zabidados has erected this altar to the god Adonis for the well-being of himself and Eklapatos, his wife, as a votive gift, on the condition that he shall make a burnt-offering [ ] to the god every year.

The excavators suggest that the intent behind the condition is to ensure that the dedicator is not prevented from regularly performing a ritual that is important to him. It is meant more as a privilege than as a commitment (*TEAD* VII/VIII: 169f). However, it is more likely that the condition is part of the vow. The well-being that Adonis is expected to bestow is met with the dedicator's commitment of making an annual burnt-offering.[35]

Dura-Europos has yielded two more undated inscriptions with the formula ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας.[36] The first is a badly damaged text from the temple of Bel. The original inscription probably counted eleven or twelve lines, but only the last six are legible (*TEAD* VII/VIII: 320):

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[34] The first character of the date is the Greek "wau", which is used to indicate the number "6". The sign is here represented by the Roman character "f".

[35] Cf. Chapter 3: Minor dedications, p. 120.

[36] Two more dated, but badly damaged, inscriptions can be added. In the temple of Zeus Theos an inscription was found from 114 AD (*TEAD* VII/VIII: 213). It is engraved on a badly damaged lintel, the remains of which suggest the employment of ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας. Another badly damaged inscription was found in the temple of Artemis. It is dated to 119 AD (*TEAD* III: 65). Its remains likewise suggest that the formula was employed. The object of dedication possibly consists of a pair of doors and a hall, [τὰ θυ]ρώματα καὶ τ[ὸν οἶκον].

> [ ] τ[ὸν] ναὸ
> ν Β[ή]λῳ θεῷ
> ὑπ[ὲρ τῆς ἑ]αυτ
> οῦ [καὶ τ]έκνων
> καὶ [ἀδε]λφῶν σ
> ωτ[ηρία]ς κατ' εὐχή[ν]
>
> *Translation:* [ ] this shrine to the god Bel for the well-being of himself and (his) children and (his) brothers as a votive gift.

As happens so often in Palmyra, especially when major dedications are concerned, the beneficiaries consist of the dedicator himself, his children (sons) and his brothers. If it is a foundation inscription, then it may approximately be dated to the first half of the first century AD (Welles 1970: 63).

The other undated text is engraved on a gypsum slab found in the temple of Atargatis. Whilst the text does not mention the object of dedication, the verb suggests it to be (part of) a temple or an altar or a similar object (*TEAD* III: 50):

> ἔτους [ ] Γορπιαίου
> Διογέν[ης κ]αὶ Διονύσιος οἱ
> Δαμονίκου τοῦ Μενάνδρο
> υ υἱοὶ ἀνήγειραν ὑπὲρ τῆς
> ἑαυτῶν καὶ ἀδελφῶν
> καὶ τέκνων καὶ μητρὸς καὶ
> συναίμων αὐ[τῶν] σωτηρί[ας]
> [καὶ] ὑγίας α[ὐτῶν] PBO[37]
>
> *Translation:* In the month Gorpiaios of the year [ ]. Diogenes and Dionysios, the sons of Damonikos son of Menandros, have erected (this) for the well-being of themselves and their brothers and their children and their mother and their relatives and for the health of [them].

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[37] The last characters of this uncertain reading may be an abbreviation or a monogram indicating the divine recipient.

The inscription is noteworthy in that five different categories of beneficiaries are listed. The first three are familiar; the others unusual. The last category, their *relatives by blood*, is an overt reference to segmentary or tribal society. Perhaps the dedicators act in their capacity as tribal chiefs. The juxtaposition of σωτηρία and ὑγίεια is exceptional, for usually only one of them appears.

In summary, all the Greek inscriptions from Dura-Europos containing an equivalent of the Aramaic formula *ʿl ḥyy* seem to have been attached to or refer to major objects of dedication: (parts of) temples as well as important and prestigious cult-objects.[38] It is customary for the beneficiaries to be related to the dedicator in terms of kinship.[39] Only once (*TEAD* II: 92) the ruler of the city is the sole beneficiary. On one occasion, he is mentioned as the prime beneficiary (*TEAD* V: 114). In neither of these inscriptions the ruler is described as being related to the dedicator. The employment of the formula corresponds largely with Palmyrene and to a lesser extent with Nabataean and Hatrene practice.

In view of Welles' (1951) study in onomastics, it is conspicuous that in approximately half of the dedicatory inscriptions cited, Semitic names abound. Now, Welles' research was not restricted to epigraphical sources. Nor does he contest that the indigenous population was absent from the different records. He suggests that, including the first century AD, the administration of the city continued to rest in the hands of the relatively small upper-class of Macedonian immigrants and that the influence of the indigenous population was only marginal. Nevertheless, some of them were able to afford major dedications. This suggests that they at least belonged to the local élite and that they engaged in the city's public affairs. It is indicative too, that in the majority of the inscriptions the relationship between dedicators and beneficiaries is couched in terms of kinship. Only twice is the ruler of the city listed among the latter. Although it is obscure how the indigenous population influenced the city's administration, in the light of this particular genre of inscriptions, Welles' suggestion about the role of Macedonian families during the first two centuries AD should be modified.

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[38] ἀνδρῶν (*TEAD* V: 114); ναός (*TEAD* VII/VIII: 129 and 320); οἶκος (*TEAD* III: 61; *TEAD* VII/VIII: 168; *TEAD* V: 142; and perhaps *TEAD* III: 65); ψαλίς (Frye e.a. 1955: 140). All these words designate a particular construction within a sanctuary. Sometimes the object of dedication is even extended: a pair of doors? (*TEAD* III: 65); paintings (*TEAD* VII/VIII: 129); a cult-bank? (*TEAD* III: 61); a *stoa* and a πλινθεῖον (Frye e.a. 1955: 140). If it is correct that *TEAD* (VII/VIII: 168) was originally placed above the lintel, then it probably also refers to a major object. Frye e.a. (1955: 129) mentions a number of φαλλοί; *TEAD* (VII/VIII: 169) refers to an altar (βωμός); Cumont (1922–23: 427) was found next to an altar to which it probably was attached; *TEAD* (V: 112) has a cult-relief (ἀφείδρυσις); *TEAD* (V: 177) may refer to a cult-statue representing Azzanathkona. The three inscriptions which remain (*TEAD* II: 92; *TEAD* III: 50; *TEAD* III: 63) all feature the verb ἀνεγείρω, which was frequently used for erecting temples, altars, etc. Because they are inscribed on slabs that were attached to the object and not on the object proper, they probably also refer to major objects of dedication.

[39] The dedicators rarely fail to mention themselves (*TEAD* III: 61; *TEAD* VII/VIII: 168) or their children (Cumont 1922–23: 427); *TEAD* VII/VIII: 169). The dedicator's brothers explicitly appear as beneficiaries three times (Cumont 1922–23: 427); *TEAD* III: 50; *TEAD* VII/VIII: 320). Likewise three times the dedicator's wife is listed (*TEAD* III: 61; *TEAD* VII/VIII: 168; *TEAD* VII/VIII: 169). Once the dedicator's 'house' is added (*TEAD* V: 112) and also once the mother and distant relatives (*TEAD* III: 50).

Considering what has been said above, the epigraphical record of Dura-Europos displays one important distinction. Twice the dedicating agency is an association, the members of which are not by definition immediately related to each other. So far, dedicating agencies comprising more than one person were restricted to siblings or to individuals who were not directly related but who engaged in some kind of co-operation. Here, however, on one occasion a number of eight (*TEAD* VII/VIII: 168) and on another a number of eleven (*TEAD* V: 114) individuals act as dedicating agencies. Nevertheless, there may be more distant relatives among them than the text suggests. If so, then tribal groups operate as cult-associations. In the first inscription, the dedicators themselves and their children are listed as beneficiaries (*TEAD* VII/VIII: 168), whereas in the other, the ruler of the city is listed as a prime beneficiary along with the dedicators themselves and their children (*TEAD* V: 114). In the latter at least one of the dedicators entertains a relationship with Aphlad, the god of Anath (*TEAD* V: 112), in whose temple the inscription was found. Therefore, the members of the association probably belong to the tribal élite of Anath, making their presence and their loyalty to the ruler of the city known in the capital.

Finally, it is noteworthy that in a number of texts the formula κατ' εὐχήν indicates the nature of the dedication. Three times the full formula is employed (*TEAD* VII/VIII: 168; *TEAD* VII/VIII: 169; Frye e.a. 1955: 140) and once, only εὐχήν (*TEAD* V: 112). In combination with ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας the best interpretation which can be offered is that the dedicators do redeem a vow but that they simultaneously create a new obligation on the part of the deity, although (κατ') εὐχήν may also have been used in an improper prospective sense.[40] The dedication represents a paralysed moment in a continuous relationship between deity and dedicator. Once the text concludes with τύχῃ ἀγαθῃ, *Good Fortune* or *The Good Hope*, whereas it is suggested that Atargatis acts as a divine recipient (*TEAD* III: 61). Now, the phrase either qualifies Atargatis—the gender is feminine but the inflexion does not correspond with that of Atargatis—, or it qualifies the act of dedication or more restrictively the formula ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας. If the latter applies, then it describes the act of dedicating as having been executed at a favourable time. It would then be similar to the expression *bnḥš' ṭb', under a lucky star*, found in H67 from Hatra and consequently τύχῃ ἀγαθῃ may refer to an act of divination.

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[40] Cf. Chapter 3: Minor dedications, p. 120.

Dura-Europos has also yielded a couple of inscriptions with the Latin formula *pro salute*. One of these is engraved on a gypsum altar found before the entrance of the temple of Jupiter Dolichenus, who together with Mithras and Hercules, was very popular among the soldiers of the Roman army. After the Roman conquest, he and Mithras were honoured with a sanctuary in Dura (Welles 1970: 64f). From the consuls mentioned in the last line, the inscription dates to 211 AD (*TEAD* IX, 3: 107):

Iovi Optimo Maximo Dolicheno Sacrum[41]
PRO SALute Marci
ANTonii VALEN
TINI EIUSQue
OMNIUM
centurionis PRINCipis VE[42]
XILLationum LEGionum IIII[43]
ET IVX Flaviae Firmae ANTOninianarum
AGATOCLES
LIBertus EIUS Votum Solvit
Libenti Animo GENTiano ET BAS
SO COnSulibus

Translation: To Jupiter Optimus Maximus Dolichenus this altar (has been erected) for the well-being of Marcus Antonius Valentinus and all those who belong to him, the chief centurion of the

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[41] Characters in the upper case are actually inscribed. Those in the lower case should be supplemented.

[42] *Centurionis* is indicated by a sign.

[43] Probably *Scyt(hicae)* has been either omitted or weathered away. Cf. next inscription.

> legionary detachments IIII (Scythica) and XVI Flavia Firma Antoniniana, by Agatocles his freedman. He willingly redeemed a vow when Gentianus and Bassus were consuls.

The dedicator is a freed slave of the prime beneficiary. As a chief commander, the latter must have held a prominent position during the time that the city was gradually being turned into a Roman stronghold (Welles 1951: 271). Hence the excavators suggest that he may have maintained a considerable household including slaves and freedmen (*TEAD* IX, 3: 109). Agatocles expresses his gratitude and loyalty towards his patron in directing to him and those who belong to him the expected recompense of his dedication. Thus, he bestows a certain honour on Antonius Valentinus and he reinforces the relationship with his patron as well as with every single member of his household, whether it be his former master's wife or his slave. Simultaneously, the patron's well-being appears to be closely linked with that of his subjects and *vice versa*. The contents of Agatocles' vow remain enigmatic. Did he make it on the occasion of his *emancipatio*?

Antonius Valentinus acts as a dedicator in an inscription found in the Mithraeum. Since Minicius Martialis is mentioned as a legate, the excavators date it between 209 AD and 211 AD, the year of Septimius Severus' death. It is engraved on a gypsum slab shaped as a *tabula ansata* (*TEAD* VII/VIII: 85):

> PRO SALute ET INCOLumitate Dominorum
> Nostrorum IMPeratorum trium Lucii SEPtimi SEVERI PII
> PERTinacis ET Marci AURELi ANTONINI [ET Lucii SEPTimi GETAe] AUG ustorum trium TEM
> PLUM DEI SOLIS INVICTI MITHRAE SUB MINICio MARTIALI PROcuratore AUGusti
> RESTitutum AB ANTonio VALENTINO centurione PRICipe PRaeposito VE[Xillationum LEGionum III]I SCYThicae et XVI Flaviae Firmae Piae Fidelis
>
> *Translation:* For the well-being and preservation of our Lords the three Emperors, Lucius Septimus Severus Pius Pertinax and Marcus Aurelius Antoninus and Lucius Septimus Geta, the three Augusti, the temple of Sol Invictus Mithra was restored when Minicius Martialis was an imperial procurator by centurion Antonius Valentinus, chief officer of the legionary detachments IIII Scythica and XVI Flavia Firma Pia Fidelis.

As often occurs when Emperors are listed as beneficiaries, the formula is extended with *incolumitate* denoting physical safety. Like νίκη and *victoria* it refers to a quality of the Emperor who is perceived to possess intrinsically qualities such as 'unassailableness' and 'invincibility'.[44] The employment in the dedicatory formula simultaneously expresses the dedicator's hopes for them. The listing of Roman Emperors as beneficiaries has at least two objectives. Firstly, the dedicator expresses loyalty. Secondly, each time Roman troops visited the shrine of Mithras—which they undoubtedly did in great numbers—, they were reminded for whom they were expected to fight. Far away from Rome and/or home, the Emperor is presented among his men. In a sense, the dedication serves to arouse chauvinistic feelings on the part of the soldiers to maintain their morale. Linking the divine recipient, Mithras, with the Emperor(s) only exacerbates the effect. The employment of such a formula had considerable impact. Dedications like this were found throughout the Roman Empire, especially in the context of the Emperor-cult, being well-attested since the reign of Augustus. By the beginning of the second century AD, it may have lost some of its original connotations and primarily become honorific. Many a military commander as well as municipal authorities erected buildings etc. in honour of the Roman Emperor.

Painted on the wall of a room in the temple of Azzanathkona a Latin text records the dedication (*TEAD* V: 226) of a minor officer who belonged to the second mounted Ulpian cohort.[45] It should be dated to the end of the second century AD, specifically between the assumption of the imperial purple by Septimius Severus and Clodius Albinus in 193 AD and the latter's death in 197 AD. If the excavators are correct in their interpretation of the sign "II" in l.6 as indicating the number of consulates of the beneficiaries, then the inscription should be dated to 194 AD. However, most of the second part of l.6 is barely legible (*TEAD* V: 227):

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[44] Cf. Veyne (1990: 477) who cites an acclamation from the "Acts of the Arval Brothers": *imperator Augustus, ex cuius incolumitate omnium salus constat.*

[45] Two excavators express their differing opinions about the interpretation of "n" in l.8. One suggests to read *n(umerorum)*, i.e. of the entire garrison stationed in Dura-Europos, whereas the other suggests to read *n(umeri)*, i.e. of the cohort in question. If the latter applies, then *n(umeri)* refers to the second Ulpian cohort. Another possibility is that *n(umerorum)* specifies *actuarius* (*TEAD* V: 228). In the late Roman Empire each military detachment had its own secretary.

Iovi Optimo Maximo
CONSERVATORI [CETE]
RISQUE DIS IMMOR[TALI]
BUS PRO SALUTEM ET VIC
TORI(AM) Domini Nostri IMPeratoris Lucii SEPtimii SEVERI
[P]ERTinacis AUGusti II Decii CLodii ALBini [CAES] II
[MIN]ERVAE SANCTae SACRUM FECI[T]
[ ]EUS MOCIMI ACTUARius Numerorum PER TRE[B][46]
IUM MAXIMUM TRIBunum COHortis ULPiae EQuitata
[VO]TUM SOLVIT LIBENS L[AETUS]
MERUIT

Translation: To Jupiter Optimus Maximus Conservator and the other immortal deities for the well-being and victory of our lord the Emperor Lucius Septimius Severus Pertinax Augustus II (and) Decius Clodius Albinus Caesar II has made [ ]eus son of Mocimus who became scribe by the agency of Trebius Maximus, tribune of the Second Mounted Ulpian cohort, the shrine of the Holy Minerva. He has willingly redeemed a vow. He has merrily served.

It is conspicuous that the entire pantheon acts as a divine recipient, whereas the object of dedication is reserved solely for the goddess Minerva. The excavators point out that Azzanathkona should not necessarily be identified with Minerva. Considering the military context, the Minerva Augusti may be concerned here. However, it is difficult to believe that this text was painted on the wall of a room of the temple of Azzanathkona by chance, suggesting that the goddesses had something in common. Whether the dedication was motivated by the dedicator's promotion is obscure.

Another salient feature is that in the formula *pro* is followed by an accusative compared to the ablative used in proper Latin. In contrast with the aforementioned inscription, the formula is extended by the concept *victoria* (= νίκη). Since the remains of the dedicator's name suggest an indigenous origin, listing the Roman Emperors as beneficiaries indeed is an expression of loyalty.[47] The dedicator nevertheless is a subscriber to the Roman army, perhaps being transferred from the *cohors XX Palmyrenorum*. This unit was attested in Dura-Europos at the beginning of the third century AD (Welles 1951: 259, 271).

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[46] It is obscure whether the dedicator made his dedication through the agency of his superior or whether he owes his appointment as an *actuarius* to him. The latter is thought to apply.

[47] In Palmyra the name 'Moqimu', *mqymw*, abounds.

A gypsum altar found in the Palmyrene gate yields another Latin text (*TEAD* I: 42). The beneficiary is the Roman Emperor Commodus, who reigned from 180–193 AD. As the epithet *felix* is added to his name, the dedication should be dated between 185 AD and 193 AD for he assumed it in 185 AD. The pair of consuls mentioned at the end of the text offers little help in this respect, since they are not attested elsewhere (*TEAD* I: 44).

> PRO SALU
> TE COMmodi AUGusti PII Felicis
> ET VICTORIAM Domini Nostri
> IMPeratoris PAC[ ]
> NIGREINUS T
> ROMENTina ET
> AELius TITTIA
> NUS DECuriones COHortis
> II ULPiae Paphlagonum EQuitata COMmodianae
> GENIO DURA
> VOTA Solverunt EMeriti EX Visu
> XV KAlendis IULIS
> PRISCO ET CLARO
> COnSulibus
>
> *Translation:* For the well-being of Commodus Augustus Pius Felix and the victory of our lord the Emperor, Pac[ ] Nigreinus Tromentina and Aelius Tittianus decurions of the Second Mounted cohort Ulpiae Paphlagonum Commodianae have redeemed vows to the Gad of Dura as veterans on account of a vision on the 15th of the month July when Priscus and Clarus were consuls.

Given the provenance of the altar, the Tyche of the city is an appropriate divine recipient. Again the dedicators are military officers who remarkably make their dedication on the occasion of their demobilization. An expression of loyalty at such a moment is hardly opportune. Of course, they may have been inspired by gratefulness and relief that they had survived. For obvious reasons the best address for expressing such feelings was the Emperor, a conception which is reinforced by the remark that they act *on account of a vision, ex visu.*

In summary, all Latin inscriptions with the formula *pro salute* date from the time after the Roman conquest in 165 AD and belong to a military context. Except for one, they were dedicated by military officers. In the remaining inscription a freedman of an officer acts as a dedicator and the freedman's patron is listed as a beneficiary. The others cite the Roman Emperor. Once the formula is extended by the concept *incolumitas* and twice by *victoria*. If the Greek inscriptions correspond largely with the Palmyrene employment of the Aramaic formula, the Latin ones appear to correspond primarily to Nabataean practice.

Single Greek and Latin inscriptions

Appendix I lists Greek and Latin inscriptions containing an equivalent of the Aramaic *ʿl ḥyy* formula. Most of them are contemporary with those from Palmyra and Hatra and originate from cities and villages in the Roman provinces of Syria and Arabia. The latter of course, basically corresponds to the former Nabataean Empire. Yet, for obvious reasons, Roman presence was much more dominant in the Mediterranean coastal area than in remote cities in the desert. This is confirmed by the frequency with which Roman Emperors or members of the imperial family act as beneficiaries. About two-thirds of the examples lists them. Approximately a quarter of these were dedicated by military officers or administrative officials. Once a freedman of the Emperor acts as a dedicator (*IGLS* no. 2713). By contrast, almost all the Latin inscriptions from Hatra and Dura-Europos present the Roman Emperor as a beneficiary and were dedicated by military officers. In addition, the Aramaic-Greek inscription from Ruwwafa, listing the Emperor as a beneficiary too, was engraved by an imperial legate.[48]

In Appendix I the inscriptions having the Emperor as prime or sole beneficiary sometimes describe the dedicators in more detail. A Greek inscription from Gerasa presents an association of fullers as a dedicating agency (Gatier 1985: 308); another one possibly an association of farmers or agriculturalists (Gatier 1985: 319). Baalbek yields an inscription in which two *money-changers* (?), *mutatores*, present a dedication *for the well-being of* the Emperor as a *mark of honour*, *ex officio* (*IGLS* no. 2717). Another one describes the dedicator as

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[48] Cf. Chapter 2, p. 77ff.

(master)-plumber, *plumbarius*, probably an occupation that is intrinsically linked with particular services rendered by the temple (*IGLS* no. 2723). An inscription reproduced by Mouterde (1925: 228) presents a *father of the city*, πατήρ πόλεως, as a dedicator. Here the object of dedication is a public building.

In addition, the Emperor acts as a beneficiary in a number of inscriptions giving only the names of the dedicators. It should be emphasized that the various objects of dedication usually feature in a religious context and frequently a divine recipient is present too. Apart from the dedications of high imperial officials perhaps, there is obviously no personal relationship between Emperor and dedicators. Three times the dedicators act *by will of*, *ex testamento*, a deceased person (*IGLS* nos. 2714, 2745 and 2964), hardly suggesting a viable relationship between dedicator and beneficiary. The dedicators express their loyalty to Roman administration, more than that they establish or reinforce a relationship with the beneficiaries. This corresponds very well with the principles of the Emperor-cult (Price 1984).

In the remaining third of the inscriptions of Appendix I, the beneficiaries are related to the dedicator in terms of kinship. In Greek inscriptions kinship-terminology does not differ very much from that in Greek and Aramaic inscriptions elsewhere. Twice, a number of persons are listed by name only (*IGLS* nos. 2910 and 4049). No indication about the nature of the relationship between dedicator and beneficiary is provided, although this may be due to the inscriptions' state of preservation. Some Latin inscriptions list beneficiaries that are related to the dedicator in terms of kinship. Of a total of ten, eight originate from Baalbek with the remaining two coming from Hermel (*IGLS* no. 2904) and Deir el-Ahmar (*IGLS* no. 2908). Their terminology is very similar to that found elsewhere, although it is noteworthy that the dedicator's wife is mentioned frequently as a beneficiary (*IGLS* nos. 2719, 2720, 2743, 2748, 2751 and 2755). In comparison with desert-cities such as Palmyra and Hatra, this may reflect the differing status of a woman as a wife in cities that are more influenced by Roman standards.

On one occasion, the prime beneficiary is the dedicator's patron, *patroni sui* (*IGLS* no. 2719). In an inscription from Hadeth the dedicator is the *educator*, *nutricius*, of the beneficiary who accordingly is qualified as *pupil*, *adulescens* (*IGLS* no. 2921). A private educator was usually employed by parents as a client or a slave. Socially, then, the educator is dependent on the pupil. His act of dedication may nevertheless originate from affection which intends to reinforce the relationship with his pupil.

Four inscriptions from Appendix I are enigmatic concerning the relationship between dedicator and beneficiary. In three of them, the term describing the beneficiaries may denote either the Emperor *cum suis* or local rulers or even mere patrons. The Latin inscription from Deir Labas (*IGLS* no. 2952) lists *their masters, dominorum.* In Parker (1978: 61) Septimius Severus and his sons Caracalla and Geta are described as *dominorum.* Admittedly, in most occasions the Emperor is listed as the prime beneficiary and the title accordingly refers to him only. By consequence, it is usually found as a singular: *domini nostri.* Other short inscriptions such as *IGLS* nos. 2115 and 2800, respectively describe the beneficiaries as *augustorum* and *imperatorum.* These indications are found throughout the Roman Empire, if the Emperor shares power with one or more sons or, eventually, some other co-regent.

It is possible, however, that local rulers are meant or patrons since the term is not specified. Similarly, a Greek text from Durbah (*IGLS* no. 2104) lists *(their) masters,* τῶν κυρίων. In a badly damaged inscription from Angarr (*IGLS* no. 2980), they are labelled as kings, βασιλέων, but it is unclear whether the term refers to local rulers or to Roman Emperors. Finally, a damaged inscription from Yabroud (*IGLS* no. 2709) does not specify the nature of the relationship between dedicator and beneficiary, as it only lists the name of the latter who may be the dedicator's patron.

As it has been pointed out in previous chapters, the formulae ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας and *pro salute* may be extended with other concepts when the Emperor acts as a beneficiary. In the bilingual inscription from Ruwwafa (Bowersock 1975: 514) discussed at the end of chapter II, διαμονή is found. Additionally, it is employed in inscriptions from Bostra (*IGLS* nos. 9057 and 9059), Baalbek (*IGLS* no. 2744) and Shaqqa (Dunand 1932: 401). At the end of chapter III, a bilingual text, the Greek part of which is badly damaged, is discussed, listing as beneficiaries the local rulers of Palmyra (CIS II: 3971). The formula *ʿl ḥyy* is extended with *zkywtʾ*, Aramaic for νίκη. Greek inscriptions from Apamea (*IGLS* no. 1346), Bostra (*IGLS* no. 9047) and Baalbek (*IGLS* 2744 and 2745b) confirm the employment of such a concept. In Latin inscriptions νίκη is rendered as *victoria* and is attested in Dura-Europos (*TEAD* I: 42 and *TEAD* V: 226), Bostra (*IGLS* no. 9058) and Baalbek (*IGLS* nos. 2711 and 2712). Finally, *incolumitas* is occasionally found, once in an example from Dura-Europos (*TEAD* V: 85) and another which originates from el-Uweinid (Parker 1978: 61). These concepts denote qualities of the Emperor which, if present, adds to his well-being. In using them in combination with σωτηρία/*salus*, depending on the preposition ὑπὲρ/*pro*, the dedicators express the wish for his rule to be blessed with 'invincibility', 'durability' and 'physical unassailableness'. Their position in the formula reinforces the effect of the dedication which aims to declare the dedicator's loyalty to Roman rule or otherwise.

The Latin inscriptions are distinguished since they abound in formulae designating the dedications as redemptions of vows. The simple *votum solvit* (*TEAD* I: 42), appears eight times; *votum solvit libenti animo* (*TEAD* IX, 3: 107) is attested ten times.[49]

The Greek equivalent κατ' εὐχὴν is only used in Dura-Europos. In addition, the dedication appears twice to have been ordered by a deity: *IGLS* no. 2743: *ex responso dei*; Seyrig (1939: 303): κατὰ κέλευσιν. Like *ex visu* (*TEAD* I: 42), these phrases suggest that the dedicators act in response to a deity. The dedication is the recompense for services rendered by the deity or the fulfilment of a divine condition so that he may bestow his benefits on behalf of the dedicators. This course of events does not answer the traditional sequence of a bargain between god and man which fulfills the definition of an ex-voto, although some elements are present. It, moreover, testifies to a vivid relationship between dedicator and deity.

Finally, a small number of Greek inscriptions (*IGLS* nos. 2744, 2905, 2932 and 2939) yield the expression εὐξάμενος. The Aramaic equivalent, *mwd'*, is frequently used in inscriptions on incense-burners dedicated to the 'Anonymous God' in Palmyra. It suggests that the dedicator acts out of gratitude for a benefit bestowed. However, the Aramaic verb *ydy* has both the meaning *to express gratitude* as well as *to do honour to* a deity. Versnel (1981b: 45ff) has demonstrated that, at least after a benefit bestowed, the dedicator may take recourse to either of these options. Here, though, the question is whether an immediate cause is present for the dedicator's act. It may describe the relationship between dedicator and deity as habitually reciprocal. Indeed, it may be asked whether dedicatory inscriptions employing the Aramaic *ʿl ḥyy* or one of its Greek or Latin equivalents do not always present a paralysed moment in a continuous relationship between dedicator and deity irrespective of the occurrence of formulae as *votum solvit* that suggest the conclusion of a bargain. It could be that the dedicator considers that his dedication creates a new debt on the part of the deity.

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[49] The simple phrase *votum solvit* is employed in: *IGLS* nos. 2714, 2719, 2720, 2745, 2904, 2921, 2952 and 2966. The extended phrase *votum solvit libenti animo* appears in: *IGLS* nos. 2711, 2712, 2713, 2715, 2743, 2748, 2751, 2752, 2755, and 2756.

In conclusion

The end of Palmyra, Hatra and Edessa as independent political entities during the third century AD resulted in the disappearance of the Aramaic formula from the epigraphical record. However, its Greek and Latin equivalents continued to be used in the Roman Emperor-cult, as is testified by the inscriptions reproduced by Mouterde (1925: 232), from approximately 280 AD, by Seyrig (1931: 322) and *IGLS* no. 499 both from the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth century AD, and by Dunand (1950: 163) from 476 AD. The formula continues to be employed even when the beneficiaries are related to the dedicator in terms of kinship as is testified by *IGLS* no. 625 from 548 AD. The finest example, though, is a series of inscriptions accompanying a mosaic measuring 120 square meters in the floor of a synagoge at Apamea which dates from the end of the fourth century AD. The individual inscriptions reveal that the floor was the product of a joint effort by male and female dedicators. Most of the inscriptions accompanying the mosaic employ the formulae ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας and εὐξάμενος consecutively. This combination of formulae is almost exclusively found in texts presenting a female dedicator.[50] In inscriptions with a male dedicator, the formula ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας is often absent, although εὐξάμενος is retained.[51] This difference may reflect the perception of a woman's status as a mother and her position in family-life in Roman Syria.

The formula ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας is also attested in a Christian context. Remarkably, it continues to reinforce extant social relationships, despite Christian doctrine on the afterlife and its bearing on the concept σωτηρία. It appears in inscriptions engraved on cultic utensils such as crosses, chalices etc.[52] The category of beneficiaries related to the dedicator in terms of kinship still appears, but for obvious reasons, the other has vanished. Occasionally, however, a new category is mentioned, such as *those who carry the object of dedication around at services*, τῶν διαφερόντων (*IGLS* nos. 2028, 2037 and 2038). Often the formula is extended by εὐχή, *vow*. A representative text is *IGLS* no. 2027 from Hama which is engraved on a silver chalice.

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[50] *IGLS* nos. 1322, 1323, 1324, 1325, 1326, 1327, 1332 and 1336. Only inscriptions *IGLS* nos. 1320 and 1337 use both formulae whilst the dedicator is a man.

[51] *IGLS* nos. 1328, 1329, 1330, 1333 and 1334.

[52] Cf. for a discussion of the use of the formula in a Christian context: Downey (1951).

> ὑπὲρ εὐχῆς καὶ σωτηρίας Ἰωάννου κ(αὶ) Θωμᾶ καὶ Μάννου τῶν Θεοφίλου
>
> *Translation:* By way of a vow and for the well-being of John and Thomas and Mannos, (sons) of Theophilos.[53]

In combination with either σωτηρίας or εὐχῆς καὶ σωτηρίας occasionally ἀναπαύσεως, *rest*, is found, all being dependent on the same ὑπέρ.[54] As Downey (1951: 350) has demonstrated, the beneficiaries of σωτηρίας on the one and ἀναπαύσεως on the other hand never are the same persons. Those after ἀναπαύσεως are deceased, but those listed after σωτηρίας are living. Whatever the impact of the concept 'afterlife' on σωτηρία in a Christian context, it is clearly distinguished from death. Consequently, the employment of the formula in a Christian context does not essentially differ from that in a pagan context, except for the disappearance of one category of beneficiaries.

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[53] Downey (1951) renders ὑπὲρ εὐχῆς καὶ σωτηρίας as *in fulfilment of a vow and for the preservation of*. This suggests that the dedicator made a vow previously and now, having been answered by God, redeems his vow. Simultaneously, however, he holds his dedication to create a new debt on the part of God which places the formula ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας in context. Another option may be proposed for the interpretation of ὑπὲρ εὐχῆς. Combined with ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας it is more plausible that it refers to the act of dedication as creating a debt on the part of God. At the same time, He is summoned to direct the redemption of the debt towards the persons listed after the formula ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας, this state of affairs being described by ὑπὲρ εὐχῆς. It should not be interpreted as '*in* fulfilment of a vow' but as '*like, by way of* fulfilment of a vow', the dedicator 'pays' in advance. However, the suggestion in Downey's rendering that the preposition ὑπέρ has two different meanings here, is most aptly countered by the observation that, in the course of time, the meaning of ὑπέρ became blurred to *concerning* (Bauer and Aland 1988: 1670ff). Other inscriptions yielding this combination of formulae are: *IGLS* nos. 1691, 1720, 1729, 1794, 1881b, 1910, 2005, 2028, 2037 and 2038.

[54] *IGLS* nos. 695, 697, 698, 733, 1584, 2035, 2044, Dunand (1950: 162) and Dunand (1950: 163). Inscriptions from a Christian context that are not referred to here: *IGLS* nos. 252, 671, 680 and 2144. The popularity of the formula in a Christian context is moreover demonstrated by the frequency it is found in inscriptions originating from the area under consideration in this inquiry and dating from the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries AD. Cf. *SEG* from about 1970 onwards.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

Deller (1983: 24) expresses, at the end of his article about the formula *ana balaṭ* in Assyrian dedicatory inscriptions, the desirability of a diachronic study to recover the nature of the social relationships that have been established. Had he meant to include the equivalent Aramaic formula *ʿl ḥyy* and its Greek and Latin equivalents, the present study might partly have answered Deller's wish. In four of the six inscriptions Deller cites, the royal family is involved. Twice the queen mother dedicates, in keeping with her status, a precious object *for the life of* her son, the king and herself.[1] Once the king's wife is the dedicator, and together with her husband, is listed as a beneficiary. On one occasion, a scribe brings a votive-offering *for the life of* the king. In the other two instances, a wife dedicates something *for the life of* her husband, herself and their children, and someone lists his father, himself, his brothers and his sons as beneficiaries of a dedication. Despite the fact that the nature of the objects of dedication remains obscure, the patterns of social relationships are very similar to those found in the Aramaic *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions which form the subject of the present study.

Despite the fact that there is no solid proof that the Aramaic formula is directly derived from its Assyrian predecessor, their socio-religious similarities strongly suggest that it continues a well-established tradition. This is fully in accordance with Drijvers' (1980: 16f) observation about the nature of culture, and religion, in this particular area of the Near East in Graeco-Roman times. Indigenous religious patterns and traditions are influenced by and assimilate Hellenistic, Arabic and Parthian-Iranian traditions so as to make up a *poly-interpretable* unity.[2] This also entails that particular elements of this indigenous culture may be expressed in another cultural idiom, maintaining its original intent and meaning, thus constituting a formal parallel.

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[1] Unfortunately, the state of preservation of the inscriptions prevents the exact identification of the objects.

[2] Cf. for a similar problem with regard to the rendering of Latin *divus* as θεός in Greek inscriptions concerning the cult of the Emperor: Sartre (1991: 116ff).

Therefore, in interpreting the bilingual inscriptions containing both the Aramaic formula and a Greek counterpart, as well as Greek and Latin inscriptions originating from the area under consideration and having an equivalent of the Aramaic formula, the meaning and connotations of the latter take precedence over the meaning and connotations originally attached to the Greek and Latin equivalents, especially if the participants and/or deities involved are of indigenous stock.[3] It is conspicuous that in the remaining Greek and Latin inscriptions containing an equivalent of the Aramaic formula and originating from the area, the Roman Emperor is listed as the sole or most important beneficiary. Obviously, in these instances the main frame of interpretation is the cult of the Roman Emperor that ranged throughout the Empire. Despite the fact that they bear resemblance to the Nabataean employment of the Aramaic formula, their true value can be rated only in relation to the use of the formula in the wider context of the Empire, for in contrast with the Nabataean examples a face-to-face social relationship between dedicator and beneficiary is usually absent. This and further employment of the Greek and Latin versions of the formula fall beyond the scope of the present inquiry.[4]

As the preceding chapters have demonstrated, the meaning and function of dedications having an inscription containing the formula *ʿl ḥyy*, depend on a number of variables including the nature of the particular object, the dedicator's status in public life and sometimes that of the beneficiaries and, finally, the function of religion in a specific context.

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[3] Just after the conclusion of the manuscript, a recently published bilingual Aramaic-Greek inscription was brought to my attention by Prof. Drijvers (Lightfoot and Healey 1991). It is engraved on an altar that was found in south-east Turkey. On palaeographical and circumstantial grounds, the editors propose to date it to the beginning of the third century AD. The Aramaic text is badly damaged. In fact, only the last line is clearly legible: *ʿl ḥyyhy, for the life of himself* (i.e. the dedicator). Although only the dedicator is mentioned as a beneficiary, the employment of the formula does not differ from the usual pattern. The Greek text is preserved more completely. It reads: 1. Διὶ Ὀλυμπίῳ 2. Μαρη[α]λλη 3. [Ἀν]τωνίος 4. Δομιττιανὸς 5. οὐετρανὸς 6. [ε]ὐξάμεν[ος] 7. ἀνέστησα, *Antonius Domittianus, a veteran, has erected (this altar) for Zeus Olympios, Lord of the gods, out of gratitude*. Excepting the identification of the deities, this is a very common votive-text. However, the remains of the Aramaic text suggest that it was meant to convey the same message as the Greek text. In this context, it is remarkable that the Greek does not yield the formula ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας. From the reservoir of votive formulae only εὐξάμενος is present. This, once again, suggests that the Greek and Latin equivalents of the Aramaic formula are merely formal parallels. In many instances, the employment of a Greek equivalent of the Aramaic formula may have been commanded by practical circumstances. After all, usually dedicator and beneficiaries do not coincide. It is possible, then, that, whereas in Aramaic recourse is taken to one and the same formula irrespective whether or not the beneficiaries consist of the dedicator only, a Greek equivalent is employed particularly when dedicator and beneficiaries do not coincide. In case they do, the dedicator has more alternatives in Greek than in Aramaic to express himself.

[4] Of course, conceptually both the Aramaic formula and its Greek and Latin equivalents are so vague that their employment in culturally different contexts is easily perceived.

Naveh (1979) has observed a close link between dedicatory inscriptions and Aramaic graffiti-texts having the formula *dkyr*, *May be remembered.* The major part of the Nabataean epigraphical record consists of this formula plus a personal name. Sometimes, another personal name reveals that the author of the text is not identical with the person to be remembered. Frequently, though, their relationship is described in terms of kinship, as occurred between the dedicators and beneficiaries of a category of *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions. The Aramaic formula *dkyr* features throughout the ancient Near East being found in Palmyra, Hatra, Edessa and Sumatar Harabesi and its surrounds. The inscriptions are attached to a variety of objects, often walls of sanctuaries etc., but a defined object of dedication usually is lacking. Thus, it is suggested that the formula may replace the object of dedication. Intrinsic qualities like conspicuousness and durability that are often attached to objects of dedication produce the act of remembering on a connotative level. Such a conception is occasionally substantiated by the qualification of the object in question as *good remembrance*, *dkrn ṭb.*

At a connotative level, another intrinsic quality that assumes utmost importance in major dedications is the conferring of prestige on the dedicator who deserves to be honoured. An inscription cited by Milik (DFD: 162) confirms that in Palmyra this is precisely the relation between *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions, if major dedications are concerned, and *lyqr*-inscriptions. The inscription in question accompanies a statue and states that it was erected *in honour of* Moqaimu, *because he has built and dedicated* a particular part of the temple of Nabu *for the life of himself and his sons*. Of course an important feature inherent to the act of honouring is remembering.

The demarcation-line between minor and major objects of dedication is diffuse, but basically coincides with whether the purpose of the particular object is *foremost* remembering or honouring. It is interesting that the meaning and function of minor dedications falls within the definition of religion as primarily *votive*-religion. This implies that the private relationship between deity and dedicator is foremost, whereas the role of major dedications is understood best if religion is primarily defined as *civic* religion. Hence, its role in the intricate web of human activities in public life is intrinsic. Accordingly, a correlation may be detected between the nature of the object of dedication and the beneficiaries. In the majority of the Nabataean, and some of the Hatrene examples, major dedications are found in large structures, including (part of) temples. Almost without exception, the respective kings and other members of the royal families act as beneficiaries in these instances. Brown's (1978a: 35) observation that "the benefactor gave over wealth to the gods who, as invisible and immortal, stood for all that could be shared by the community" partially applies here. Religion is the channel by which society's surplus that is accumulated in the hands of a few of its members returns to the community. By means of the inscription, however, the dedicator simultaneously establishes a link with legal authority. In the Nabataean examples, this is sometimes underscored by identifying his ancestral god(s) with that of the beneficiary, the royal family, who acts as a divine recipient. Given the fact that central authority is epitomized in the respective royal families, the dedications obviously function as declarations of loyalty. Concomitantly, the link with the royal family may add to the dedicator's prestige. Considering that, in his turn, the dedicator is an epitome of a tribal group, and on the basis of the importance of genealogies for defining the dimensions of such a group in segmentary society, his genealogy may indicate the number of people involved. This all substantiates the conception of the institution of kingship here as a personal union.

A similar institution appears in Palmyra only at the end of its existence, when Zenobia and her son Wahballat craved for the Roman imperial purple. Consequently, except for one example dated to *c*.272 AD, the 'royal' family does not feature as a beneficiary in Palmyrene *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions. Instead, the beneficiaries of major dedications in Palmyra, and occasionally in Hatra, are without exception the dedicator's *sons and brothers*. An important observation may be that these major dedications primarily belong to the first and beginning of the second centuries AD, i.e. the time prior to and shortly after the Roman administrative reorganization of the city. If the latter contributed to a decline in the primacy of kinship-ties whilst structuring society to the benefit of 'civic' principles, then the employment of *sons* and *brothers* describing the beneficiaries of major dedications may be significant. In tribal or segmentary society, groups are usually indicated as *the sons of X*, *bny X*, implying that the social relationship between its members physically *is* or/and *is held* to equal that of brothers.

Although the phrase *sons of X* is never employed to describe the beneficiaries of an *ʿl ḥyy*-inscription, it is conspicuous that its frequency is greater in inscriptions dated to the first century AD and to the early second century AD than in later ones. By contrast, some of the dedicators of major objects explicitly announce that they belong to the *Beni So-and-So*. The long genealogies of these dedicators, which are sometimes telescoped, furthermore suggest that they represent large tribal groups. The sum total favours the conception of kinship-terminology as classificatory which indeed applies if it is assumed that the status of the dedicator was so exalted that he is allowed to describe some of his fellow-tribesmen as *sons*. Of course, it might apply to a situation in which these fellow-tribesmen depend on him as clients. Certainly, kinship-terminology features prominently in patron-client bonds and a difference in status is inherent in a 'father-son' relationship aside from a variety of protective qualities.

However, the employment of *sons* and *brothers* is more plausibly explained, if they are conceived of, not as classificatory concepts, but foremost as descriptive. Thus, the dedicator restricts the prestige to be gained from his dedication to his immediate offspring and his siblings. This would certainly enhance the impact of the inscription cited by Milik (DFD: 162). Brown's observation, cited above, about the status of these dedications also applies here. However, their meaning and function in the social relationship between dedicator and beneficiaries is not to express loyalty, but to keep the prestige they engender in the 'family' and to commit the beneficiaries once more to the dedicator. The long genealogy of the dedicator serves to define precisely who is entitled to derive prestige from his dedication, but simultaneously rallies and commits distant relatives as well, although they are not specifically mentioned as beneficiaries. Both the act of dedicating and the restriction of the ensuing honour and divine blessings comply with the phenomenon of *philotimia*.

Implicitly, but on a different level, an entire tribe may benefit from the dedication of a major object. Since it may be assumed that the dedicator belongs to the tribal élite, it is only natural that his *sons* and *brothers* do also. As such, each of the latter epitomizes a tribal segment consisting of close and distant relatives, clients, slaves, etc., each of which benefits from this one dedication. Thus, those who benefit *in nomine* may not coincide with those who *de facto* benefit from major dedications.

The descriptive conception of kinship-relations in *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions attached to major dedications is substantiated by the fact that the beneficiaries are never described as *Beni So-and-So* suggesting a substantial tribal group. Such a qualification of 'Beni' is a prerequisite for conceiving of kinship-terminology as classificatory. Its use would basically correspond with that in expressions like 'the members of a caravan', *bny šyrtʾ*, or 'the members of a cult-association', *bny mrzḥ*. However the members of such groups may have addressed each other, they obviously felt the need to qualify the concept 'son' if it was applied beyond the natural context of physical relations. As is the case today, the ancients were aware that within a tribal group social relationships are not physical by definition.

Incited by *philotimia*, major dedications play their part in the economy of 'euergetism' and 'patronage'. In the context covered by the present study, their counterpart, the honouring of a patron or benefactor by the beneficiaries, is only explicitly attested in Palmyra, where a large quantity of *lyqr*-inscriptions, usually belonging to statues and specifying the dedicating agent's motives, were found. *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions evoke honour and respect for the dedicator; *lyqr*-inscriptions express them. Each genre conveys the same message serving to enhance the status of the dedicator. Hence, the dedicating agent of major dedications usually consists of one or sometimes a few members of the municipal élite. The dedicating agent of *lyqr*- inscriptions is usually described as a collective body, such as the city-council or the members of a caravan. The beneficiary of the latter is as a rule one person, whereas the beneficiaries of the former may be considered to be a collective body. If the dedicating agent of a *lyqr*-inscription is one single person, then he usually is a client of the honoured. Remarkably, kinship-terminology, so prominently present in *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions, is absent from *lyqr*-inscriptions in a honorific context. Therefore, the social context of the latter is broader than that of the former.

It is only in a funerary context, where the builder of a tomb is allowed to employ the formula *lyqr* to his own benefit and that of his male offspring. This usually comprises up to two generations, and sometimes also his father. Thus, there is an emphasis on *vertical* kinship-relations, which is underscored by the extension of the formula with the phrase *in eternity, ʿd ʿlm*. By contrast, both in *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions and in *lyqr*-inscriptions in a honorific context, the emphasis is on *horizontal* dimensions of social relationships, kinship or otherwise. The genealogical 'depth' reaches to the immediate descendants only.

In Palmyra the divine recipient of minor dedications is almost invariably the 'Anonymous God'. In contrast with major dedications, they are attested only from the beginning of the second century onwards. Their numbers far exceed the amount of major objects, a discrepancy that is all the more conspicuous, since the 'Anonymous God' does not appear to have inhabited a sanctuary. Apart from any archaeological verification, the small incense-burners that act as objects of dedication originate from find-spots all over the city. Again in contrast with major dedications, the kinship-terminology relating beneficiaries to the dedicator is varied. As well as *sons* and *brothers*, a variety of immediate kin: *fathers*, *mothers* and *daughters* act as beneficiaries. Most conspicuously, the members of one's *house, bny byth*, are introduced as such. Thus, the scope of the beneficiaries is limited to the dedicator's direct social relationships in daily life, for the connotations of *his house* are not genealogical but residential in the general sense of the term. Accordingly, the dedicator's genealogy usually comprises only one or two generations.

Some major objects are dedicated by women, but the amount of females among the dedicators of minor ones is far greater. This augments the suggestion that the small incense-burners having the 'Anonymous God' as a divine recipient, may be explained best if religion is conceived primarily as *votive*, because the role of women in public life was restricted. Exceptions only confirm the rule. As a concept *votive*-religion highlights the private spheres of religious life and subsequently accounts best for the opportunities of women to act as dedicators.

Of course, the dedications were erected publicly and somewhat resemble the innumerable votive-tablets found in sanctuaries of oracular and healing gods throughout the Roman Empire that honour or express gratitude to the deity in question for the benefits he or she bestowed at the request of the dedicator (Versnel 1981b). The qualification of the 'Anonymous God', *because he called upon Him and He has answered him*, which so prominently features in dedicatory inscriptions without the formula *ʿl ḥyy* and listing no beneficiaries, substantiates this conception. The 'Anonymous God', then, appears foremost as a deity who excels because of his personal relationship with his worshippers. Simultaneously, it seems important for the latter to publicize this relationship. Since so many worshippers participated in it, the 'cult' of the 'Anonymous God' almost appears as a civic cult, although it obeyed other rules than traditional ones.

In Hatra, the correlation between major and minor dedications and the different categories of beneficiaries has become blurred, if it can be observed at all. Major objects are not necessarily dedicated *for the life of sons* and *brothers* only. Other categories like *whoever is dear to* (the dedicator), *rḥym*, are introduced. As Chapter 4 demonstrates, depending on the context, the concept *whoever is dear to* may denote the dedicator's clients. In this case the phrase is the coping-stone of an enumeration of other categories of beneficiaries. Also, it may comprise all who consider themselves socially related to the dedicator including close and distant kin as well as clients and 'friends', if the phrase is used exclusively to indicate the beneficiaries. However, where major dedications are concerned, the genealogy of the dedicator usually is rather long, as in Palmyra. Compared with the short genealogies of minor dedications and considering the rallying function of genealogies in general, this suggests that the more public the status of the object, the greater the need to present a long genealogy. Of course, renowned ancestors added to the dedicator's prestige. The appearance of amounts of money as objects of dedication is remarkable in Hatra in that it enlarges the social accessibility of *ʿl ḥyy*-dedications.

Most conspicuously, the formula may be attached to statues representing human beings. In contrast with the *lyqr*-inscriptions in Palmyra, though, the beneficiaries are never identical with the persons represented. Therefore, the statue serves to underscore the act of expressing loyalty, for socially the dedicator usually depends on the beneficiary. By erecting a statue of someone close to the beneficiary, he courts his favour. Importantly, there is no tie of kinship linking dedicators and beneficiaries. Thus its function resembles that of Palmyrene *lyqr*-inscriptions having clients 'honouring' their patrons. This impression is enhanced by the absence of a divine recipient, although little value should be attached to this, because the nature or the context of the dedications as a rule is religious. A dedicator may not feel impelled to indicate this explicitly, if the context is obvious.

The Aramaic and Greek examples commented on in Chapter 5 comply largely with the picture of the meaning and function of the formula that has been drawn so far. Once a grave-monument serves as an object of dedication (Drijvers 1981). This substantiates the observations of Burkert (1987), MacMullen (1981) and Veyne (1983) that votive-religion in the Roman Empire allows for everything to become an object of dedication.

More important is that the majority of Latin inscriptions employing the equivalent *pro salute* present the Roman Emperor and other members of the imperial family as beneficiaries. At the same time, the formula may be extended, in these instances, with concepts like 'victory' (*victoria*, νίκη, *zkywt'*), 'unassailableness' (*incolumitas*) and 'durability' (διαμονή). As well as the inscription from Ruwwafa in former Nabataean territory which mentions the Roman Emperor as a beneficiary (Chapter 2), Palmyra (CIS II: 3971) and Hatra (H341) each have yielded one inscription in this category listing local rulers as beneficiaries. These extensions correlate with the status of the beneficiaries. Like most Nabataean *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions, they express loyalty to legitimate authority. Otherwise, the employment of Latin *pro salute* corresponds with that of Aramaic *ʿl ḥyy*, and Greek ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας or ὑπὲρ ὑγιείας. Despite that, in a Christian context only one category of beneficiaries is retained—that which relates them with the dedicator in terms of kinship—, the intent of the act from which the formula derives its meaning, remains the same.

The meaning and function of the formula in many ways depend on the context in which it is found. It is important, whether a major or minor dedication is concerned. Likewise, the status of the dedicators and the beneficiaries is a determining factor. If that of the dedicator is inferior to that of the beneficiary, then the main purpose of the dedication is to express loyalty, as witnessed by the majority of Nabataean and Latin examples. If that of the dedicator is superior to that of the beneficiaries, then, in major dedications, the dedicator presents himself as a benefactor liable to receive appropriate honours part of which he directs towards the beneficiaries who are usually close kin, thereby committing them to him once more. Where minor objects are concerned, the dedicator commits foremost the beneficiaries to him by publicly linking them with him. Of course, in every act something of all these different connotations is present.

Nevertheless, in that the social relationships expressed in *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions are either extant or desired, this category of inscriptions perfectly illustrates Geertz's (1973b: 93) observation that cultural patterns may simultaneously act as a model *of* and a model *for* 'reality'.

APPENDIX A

ASSESSING DIODORUS' AND STRABO'S ACCOUNTS ON THE NABATAEANS

The locus classicus usually referred to for picturing Nabataean society at the end of the fourth century BC is extracted from chapter 94 of Book XIX of Diodorus Siculus, who writes from the middle of the first century BC onwards. He describes the Nabataeans as living

> in the open air, claiming as native land a wilderness that has neither rivers nor abundant springs from which it is possible for a hostile army to obtain water. It is their custom neither to plant grain, set out any fruit-bearing tree, use wine, nor construct any house.... Some of them raise camels, others sheep, pasturing them in the desert. While there are many Arabian tribes who use the desert as pasture, the Nabataeans far surpass the others in wealth although they are not much more than ten thousand in number; for not a few of them are accustomed to bring down to the sea frankincense and myrrh and the most valuable kinds of spices, which they procure from those who convey them from what is called Arabia Eudaemon.

In order to illustrate the rapid developments and profound changes in Nabataean society over about three centuries, a passage from Strabo (*c*.63 BC–*c*.25 AD) is cited, dating from around the turn of the Era. It relates that, since the Nabataeans

> have but few slaves, they are served by their kinsfolk for the most part, or by one another or by themselves; so that the custom extends even to their kings. They prepare common meals together in groups of thirteen persons; and they have two girl-singers for each banquet. The king holds many drinking-bouts in magnificent style, but no one drinks more than eleven cupfuls, each time using a different golden cup. The king is so democratic that, in addition to serving himself, he sometimes even serves the rest himself in his turn. He often renders an account of his kingship in the popular assembly; and sometimes his mode of life is examined. Their homes, through the use of stone, are costly; but, on account of peace, the cities are not walled. Most of the country is well supplied with fruits except the olive; they use sesame-oil instead. The sheep are white-fleeced and the oxen are large, but the country produces no horses.

> Camels afford the service they require instead of horses (Geography XVI, 4: 26).

I do not wish to challenge the idea that Nabataean society was exposed to developments and changes during the three centuries separating Diodorus' account from that of Strabo. Yet, the view that these accounts are representative for Nabataean society for the periods to which they are respectively attributed must be queried, because it promotes a contorted impression.[1] It has repeatedly been suggested that during the three centuries which separate Diodorus' source, Hieronymus of Cardia (*c*.354–*c*.250 BC), from Strabo's main source, his contemporary Athenodorus, the Nabataeans exchanged their nomadic way of life for a sedentary one.

However, there may be inherent reasons behind the different pictures of Nabataean society, that are not determined by the chronological factor. Hieronymus' encounter with the Nabataeans, is coloured by hostilities. Indeed, from a Nabataean point of view, he would have belonged to the enemy camp. Consequently, Diodorus' account in Book XIX is full of military intelligence. The figure quoted for the number of Nabataeans—not much more than ten thousand—probably refers to the total number of fighting men rather than the size of the Nabataean population. Indeed, Diodorus states that "the Nabataeans . . . attacked the camp . . . being no less than eight thousand in number" (XIX, 95: 5) and that they outrivalled the enemy troops of Athenaeus which counted "four thousand light foot-soldiers and six hundred horsemen fitted for speed" (XIX, 94: 1). Strabo's informer Athenodorus, on the other hand, visited Petra under peaceful conditions, perhaps to consult fellow-philosophers. Apart from the fact that he took a professional interest in politics and jurisdiction as well as in religious and social life, he had more of an opportunity to participate in Petrene society than Hieronymus.

The Nabataeans are mentioned by Diodorus twice more. In Book III he relates that

> After one has sailed past this country the Laeanites Gulf comes next, about which are many inhabited villages of Arabs who are known as Nabataeans. This tribe occupies a large part of the coast and not a little of the country which stretches inland, and it has a people numerous

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[1] Cf. Starcky (1955), Negev (1977), Hammond (1973), Lindner (1980b) and Bowersock (1983).

> beyond telling and flocks and herds in multitude beyond belief. Now in ancient times these men observed justice and were content with the food they received from their flocks, but later, after the kings in Alexandria had made the ways of the sea navigable for their merchants, these Arabs not only attacked the shipwrecked, but fitting out pirate ships preyed upon the voyagers, imitating in their practices the savage and lawless ways of the Tauri of the Pontus; some time afterward, however, they were caught on the high seas by some quadriremes and punished as they deserved (III, 43: 4–5).[2]

In Book II he describes Arabia as follows

> This land is situated between Syria and Egypt, and is divided among many peoples of diverse characteristics. Now the eastern parts are inhabited by Arabs, who bear the name of Nabataeans and range over a country which is partly desert and partly waterless, though a small section of it is fruitful. And they lead a life of brigandage and overrunning a large part of the neighbouring territory they pillage it, being difficult to overcome in war (II, 48: 2).

In subsequent passages Diodorus twice lists as a distinguishing mark the Nabataean knowledge of survival in a waterless environment, because of their ability to trace and store water (II, 48: 2–5; XIX, 94: 7–9). Twice, he also refers to their military strength due to their strategic use of the desert as a place of refuge, knowing where to look for water over and against their enemies (II, 48: 2–4; XIX, 94: 6).[3] Furthermore, Diodorus twice mentions a rock having but one single artificial approach that is used by the Nabataeans as an entrenchment (II, 48: 6; XIX, 97: 1). Some believe this to be the city of Petra—after all the name means rock in Greek—, but others explicitly deny such an identification. Finally, he refers twice to the asphalt lake or Dead Sea in connection with the Nabataeans (II, 48: 6–9; XIX, 98–99). Once he explicitly links it with Nabataean territory and activity (II, 48); and once his description of the Dead Sea immediately follows the story of the retreat of Demetrius, son of Antigonus Monophthalmos, from the fortified rock (XIX, 98–99). After having made vain attempts to conquer it, Demetrius heads back North, and after having marched about three hundred stades, i.e. *c*.34 miles or *c*.52 km, he camped near the Dead Sea (XIX, 98: 1). Although there may be some doubts about the accuracy of the number of stades, it may be inferred that it represents the distance between the Nabataean rock-shelter and the Dead Sea. Therefore, the regions surrounding the Dead Sea belonged to Nabataean territory or Nabataean spheres of influence as early as the end of the fourth century BC. However, Diodorus never explicitly describes its inhabitants as 'Nabataeans'. Instead, he refers to them as natives (II, 48: 8), barbarians (II, 48: 8; XIX, 98; XIX, 99), the people who live about the sea (XIX, 99) or Arabs (XIX, 100: 2). Once, it seems, he considers them to belong to the Nabataean people, viz. in Book II (48: 6). If so, then the growing of palm- and balsam-trees in these areas may also be a Nabataean activity (II, 48 9; XIX, 98).

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[2] In a note Oldfather suggests that *Laeanites Gulf* should probably be read as *Aelanites*, the modern Gulf of Aqaba.

[3] Diodorus makes no allusion whatsoever to the Nabataeans using the desert as a place of refuge out of cowardice or love of peace, as is sometimes suggested. It is simply a part of their strategy for they are familiar with the area and their enemies usually are not. This allows them to surprise and to reduce their enemies unexpectedly.

Apart from a number of similarities, Diodorus' accounts of the Nabataeans show some inconsistencies. In Book XIX, he gives an exact figure of the number of the Nabataeans, whereas in Book III we are told that it is *a people numerous beyond telling*. Furthermore, Book III informs us explicitly that they inhabit villages—and thus lead a sedentary life—, and at the same time that they engage in stock-breeding—which supposes a nomadic way of life—. Book XIX emphasizes that, next to stock-breeding, they are occupied with trade, which accounts for their riches. Yet, in Book II and Book III brigandage and piracy are respectively mentioned as important Nabataean activities that were lucrative.

In order to smooth the inconsistencies in Diodorus' accounts, it might be proposed that, since he was writing in the middle of the first century BC and, apart from Egypt, probably never visited the Ancient Near East personally, his sources were at fault. Indeed, he heavily draws on Hieronymus of Cardia in Book XIX, whilst he probably depends on Agatharchides of Cnidus, who lived in the second half of the second century BC for Book III. For Book II he might depend on Poseidonius of Apameia, a stoic philosopher whose teaching is dated to the beginning of the first century BC. Consequently, it might be maintained that each of these sources successively describes a different episode of Nabataean history and development and that from Hieronymus of Cardia onwards the Nabataeans were involved in a process of sedentarization. This hypothesis does not account for the similarities in Diodorus' story, nor does it do justice to him as an independent author. It silently assumes that he gratuitously copied his sources without comparing and valuing them. This is not, however, the impression gained by all those occupied with his writings. On the contrary, he is highly respected for the creative treatment of his sources.[4] Hence, neither the similarities nor the differences in his accounts about the Nabataeans should be a matter of dispute. Rather, one should wonder why he did not notice the inconsistencies himself, and why it did not strike him as odd, and, consequently, why he did not arrange them in a proper chronological order. The most plausible answer to these questions is that he did not think the different accounts to be mutually exclusive, or he simply knew that they were not. If so, then according to Diodorus each source described and emphasized a particular aspect of Nabataean society. The picture he paints is composed of several elements: sedentaries, stock-breeding nomads, traders and robbers (Hammond 1973: 65ff; Hammond 1982; Knauf 1986: 76).[5]

It may be objected that such a picture of Nabataean society does apply to Diodorus' times, but that his main source on the early history of the Nabataeans, Hieronymus of Cardia, is still conspicuously silent about its sedentary component. However, for both Diodorus and for Hieronymus its mention is of minor importance for their accounts. The information that the Nabataeans are nomadic stock-breeders is relevant, since their flocks are carried off by Athenaeus' troops as a result of the first campaign to subdue them. After having recaptured their flocks, they make a proposal for peace, which is initially accepted by Antigonus. He nevertheless equips another army to subject them, this time under the command of his son, Demetrius. Since the Nabataean stronghold proves itself to be impregnable, this attempt fails too. Eventually, Demetrius settles with a ransom voluntarily offered by the Nabataeans.[6] This may be the reason that at the outset of the story on the Nabataeans in Book XIX, it is related that they engaged in trade, which is given as a factor for their riches and their ability to offer a ransom. It can not be inferred from Hieronymus', or Diodorus', silence on a sedentary component of Nabataean society that it was non-existent at the end of the fourth century BC, especially since it has been established that pastoral nomadism and trade, presupposes a sedentary component (de Geus 1979: 14).

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[4] Cf. C.H. Oldfather, General Introduction, Loeb 1968, p. XVII: "he picked and chose more widely and more wisely than has been allowed him by most critics".

[5] Cf. also Seeden and Wilson (1984) who establish that a pattern of interaction between nomads and sedentaries existed in Bostra over several centuries, and Lindner (1980b: 43ff), who points to the fabrication of pottery as a mark of sedentarization.

[6] About two centuries later they similarly buy off the Roman general Scaurus who on Pompeius' orders marched against Petra (Sartre 1979: 43f).

Strabo's allusions to the Nabataeans are not unequivocal either. Although he travelled a lot and much of what he relates is first-hand knowledge, large tracts of his instructions on Nabataean society and history are hear-say, as he frequently admits. Two of his sources are Eratosthenes (*c.*284–204 BC) and Artemidorus (*c.*100 BC), who both, like Strabo, wrote a major work on 'Geography'. His main source on the Nabataeans is his contemporary Athenodorus, who dwelt in Petra for a while. One of the first times Strabo mentions them is in the context of the distance between Heroes and Babylon. Roughly pointing out the route to be followed, he mentions only one halting-place: Petra of the Nabataeans. This is noteworthy, for, although it might originate from Strabo himself—by his time Petra indeed was a flourishing city—, he claims that his information was derived from Eratosthenes (Geography, XVI, 4: 2). This intimates that already by the middle of the third century BC, Petra had gained such an importance and reputation that it served as the sole point of orientation in the description of a route measuring well over six hundred miles. In the same passage it is told that "the first people who occupy Arabia Felix, after the Syrians and Judaeans, are farmers. After these the soil is sandy and barren . . .; and it is occupied by tent-dwellers and camel-herds" (Geography XVI, 4: 2).

If it is true that Strabo derived these lines from Eratosthenes also, as he himself suggests, then they must refer to Nabataean territory. Then it would testify to Nabataean society consisting of both a sedentary and a nomadic component in the middle of the third century BC. After this, Strabo continues with the information provided by Artemidorus about Arabia saying that Nabataea is

> a country with a large population and well supplied with pasturage. They also dwell on islands situated off the coast near by; and these [Nabataeans] formerly lived a peaceful life, but later, by means of rafts, went to plundering the vessels of people sailing from Aegypt. But they paid the penalty when a fleet went over and sacked their country (Geography XVI, 4: 18).[7]

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[7] The brackets indicate that the designation 'Nabataeans' in the translation does not occur in the Greek text.

This passage is very similar to that in Book III of Diodorus which is attributed to Agatharchides of Cnidus. Since Strabo also counts Agatharchides among his sources (Geography, XVI, 4: 20), it is possible that the story depicting the Nabataeans as pirates is extracted from the same source. Conspicuously, both Strabo and Diodorus describe 'Nabataea' as a country with a large population and abundant pasturage, whilst depicting the Nabataeans as pirates.

Following some expansions on the geographical data of the Arabian peninsula, Strabo resumes his account of the Nabataeans in Book XVI, 4: 21. It is unclear whether all his information is derived solely from Athenodorus or whether he used additional sources. Interestingly, he considers that the Nabataeans were subject to the Romans, although the official annexation of the Nabataean Empire took place almost a century later. Perhaps, this remark reflects the good relations between Romans and Nabataeans in his time. He continues with a description of the city of Petra as an impregnable stronghold in the desert that is well-supplied with water. It is the royal residence and as such exceedingly well-governed. This judgement is followed by an illustration. Both observations are attributed to Athenodorus.

Strabo proceeds to report extensively about the fiasco of Aelius Gallus' expedition into Arabia. It was ordered by Augustus, who dreamt of incorporating the riches of Arabia Eudaemon into the Roman Empire so as to tap new resources of revenue.[8] As the Nabataeans, the traditional traders of the products from the south of the peninsula, promised to co-operate fully and support the enterprise, presumably Augustus felt confident about his chances of success. In spite of this promise and the presence of a detachment of one thousand Nabataean soldiers or mercenaries under the command of the vizier Syllaeus, who was commissioned to accompany and to guide Aelius Gallus and his troops of more than ten thousand men, the expedition turned out to be a complete disaster. According to Strabo there was only one man to blame: Syllaeus. He is depicted as a man avaricious for power and to this end, treacherous in every single respect. Thus he shelved his master, king Obodas, whom some have identified as the one and only Nabataean king deemed to be worthy of receiving divine honour and respect by his subjects as Obodas the God.[9]

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[8] Cf. Eadie (1986: 248f).

[9] Cf. Appendix E. In the light of Strabo's assessment of his rule, and to a lesser extent that of Josephus, this is a very peculiar and dubious matter. Especially, because it is

Perhaps, this episode should be regarded as a cunning demonstration of Nabataean policy that pushed Syllaeus to the fore as a kind of scape-goat to avert measures of retaliation from the Romans. Indeed, the Nabataeans had no vested interest in the success of the expedition which would eventually overshadow them as traders, because it would deprive them of their monopoly and, consequently, a major source of income. On the other hand, it would be unwise to offend the Romans, a powerful ally, by not co-operating with them. Some of the peculiar remarks and inconsistencies in Strabo's account of the expedition may illustrate this dilemma. He depicts the Nabataeans as poor soldiers "... for the Arabians are not very good warriors even on land, rather being hucksters and merchants, to say nothing of fighting at sea" (Geography, XVI, 4: 23).

Either such an impression was consciously faked, or the Nabataean government sent a detachment of mercenaries that was only as familiar with the area as the Romans. Like them, this detachment may have had difficulties in coping with the specific demands posed by the terrain. In addition, as Strabo himself noticed, it is conspicuous that Syllaeus did not lead the expedition along the caravantrack from Petra down south, but insisted on sailing by boat to Leuce Come, a Nabataean harbour and emporium on the west-coast of the Arabian peninsula; and presumably the harbour of Hegra. Once disembarked, the expedition was led astray. It is curious that Strabo creates the impression that Syllaeus, because he is supposed to have been familiar with the route to be followed, deliberately misled the expedition but simultaneously intended to use the Roman army to his own ends. Clearly a tension exists. It surely sounds foolish that someone eager to use a certain force to realize his own goals, first oversees its decimation. Possibly Syllaeus was not as familiar with the route as Strabo assumes or, he acted in strict accordance with Nabataean policy and his pretensions are mere conjecture. For one reason or another, Strabo aims to depict Syllaeus as wicked as possible. On a contrary note, Aretas, introduced as a kinsman of king Obodas, who as a member of the royal family probably presented and represented state-power in the remote southern areas of the Empire is said to have been a most helpful and friendly ally of Aelius Gallus.

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common knowledge that at least one more king by the name of Obodas ruled the Nabataeans. However, little is known about the quality of his reign and he may have been more eligible to receive the honour of deification.

According to Strabo, Aelius Gallus became aware of Syllaeus' treacherous behaviour only when the mission was almost completed, but his force was decimated. Nothing further is reported about Syllaeus, except for his subsequent conviction and beheading in Rome. Once again, a tension may be sensed. Aelius Gallus' expedition is usually dated around 25 BC, whereas the exposure of Syllaeus' treacherous behaviour in this and related matters is linked with the troubles of succession after Obodas' death in 9 BC.[10] It is perplexing that, in spite of Aelius Gallus' knowledge of Syllaeus' deceitfulness, the Romans did not undertake to subdue the Nabataeans or to punish Syllaeus. Moreover, it is inconceivable that Roman authority was not informed about the reasons for the fiasco until twelve years later, especially since Strabo records the return of Aelius Gallus. Surely, he would have reported his findings to the imperial court, especially since the Emperor himself initiated the expedition in the first place. Yet, there are no indications of a decline in relations between the Romans and Nabataeans.[11] Indeed, it seems as if the imperial court was not informed about Syllaeus' deceitful behaviour earlier than around 9 BC, as Josephus reports. Following his disappearance in the Arabian desert, Syllaeus presumably resumed his high position at the Nabataean court, for he plays a major part in Josephus' account of the history of the Jews until his conviction and beheading in Rome. If he had been acting contrary to the policy of the Nabataean court in leading Aelius Gallus' expedition to its Waterloo, then, surely, he must have had a very convincing explanation. Communications may have been slow, but he could not have successfully duped the royal court about what had happened in the desert for a very long period of time.

Strabo's account of this expedition is riddled with puzzling matters, inducing a hoard of problems and questions. It simultaneously allows for abundant speculations. This state of affairs is brought about not only by what he relates, but also by what he omits, especially if another source, like Josephus, may be adduced to fill in some of his deficiencies. At the same time, however, the combination of sources creates an additional set of problems that were not realized before.

Following his story of Aelius Gallus' expedition and exposition on the peoples that inhabit Arabia Felix and their customs, Strabo returns to describe some characteristics of the Nabataeans.[12] Although he does not explicitly mention it, it is probable that the information reported here was conveyed to him by Athenodorus. He offers some detailed accounts of the practices of the Nabataean royal court which are situated in a ritual setting. As the royal court resided at Petra, it may be assumed that the rituals and customs, described by Strabo, have their meaning and function in public life in the capital. The growing of fruits and the breeding of sheep, oxen, and camels, then, may refer especially to the city of Petra and its immediate environment, which was well-supplied with water. The breeding of sheep and camels is an outstanding nomadic activity; but the breeding of oxen as well as agriculture is a sedentary affair in the steppe-regions. Consequently, Strabo leaves the impression of relating the characteristics of Nabataean society as far as Petra is concerned, which may not be representative at all.

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[10] Cf. Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* XVI: 10, 8.

[11] From Pompeius' appearance in the Near East onwards, relations between Rome and the Nabataeans seem always to have been cordial (Sartre 1979: 46ff).

Excepting some casual remarks, there is no reference whatsoever to one of the most important sources of income of the Nabataeans, the caravan-trade. One of them is found in XVI, 4: 24, during an explanation for the diversion of part of the trade-traffic from the Arabian peninsula to Egypt; another appears in XVI, 4: 23, when Strabo wonders why Syllaeus had Aelius Gallus to sail to Leuce Come instead of marching southwards by land, "for camel-traders travel back and forth from Petra to this place in safety and ease, and in such numbers of men and camels that they differ in no respect from an army" (Geography, XVI, 4: 23).

Making a reliable assessment of Diodorus' and Strabo's respective contributions to the unraveling of the history of the Nabataeans as well as the development of Nabataean society, then, is an extremely difficult and precarious task, particularly, if their accounts are compared and it is assumed that the situations they describe are separated chronologically by approximately three centuries. Since both authors draw heavily on sourceworks, it is hard to disentangle the information they extract from these from the overall conception they present on the history of the Nabataeans and the characteristics of Nabataean society. The task is made more difficult, since it is practically impossible to recover the particular bias and specific attitudes towards the Nabataeans inherent in the sourceworks; the majority of them being lost. Undoubtedly, such bias and attitudes were present and inevitably, events that were considered remarkable or interesting from a particular point of view were vividly related, whereas others were under-exposed. It is hazardous to consider Diodorus and Strabo as reliably depicting Nabataean society at two different points in history, and, subsequently, to assume a particular development from the one to the other. It may tentatively be proposed that in the three centuries separating Hieronymus of Cardia from Athenodorus, Petra indeed did develop from merely a Nabataean entrenchment to one of the most fabulous cities of the Ancient Near East. Providing that the rock of entrenchment in Diodorus' account, is identified as the kernel around which the city of Petra alluded to by Strabo developed.

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[12] Cf. quotation above: *Geography*, XVI, 4: 26.

If Diodorus' and Strabo's accounts are compared in order to recover certain developments in Nabatean society, then the results may perhaps apply to Petra and its immediate environment, rather than being representative for the Nabataean Empire generally. The far-reaching inference that in the three centuries separating Hieronymus of Cardia from Athenodorus, the Nabataeans as a whole experienced a shift from a nomadic to a sedentary way of life can in no way be entertained. Even the slightest suggestion of such a development should be dealt with with caution. The limitations of Diodorus and Strabo as sources for reconstructing Nabataean history should be recognized, particularly to challenge a particular theory on the development of Nabataean society. However, Diodorus and Strabo should not be rejected as sources for the life and history of the Nabataeans, merely placed in perspective.

APPENDIX B

ABOUT TRANSLATING ARAMAIC *ʿl ḥyy*

Following Yadin (1962: 240; idem 1963: 230), Negev (1977: 546) suggests interpreting the formula *ʿl ḥyy* not as *for the life of*, but as *during the lifetime of*.[1] Accordingly, Yadin and Negev consider the formula to be an equivalent of *ʿl šny*, *in the years of* (DISO: 209). Yadin made his suggestion on account of the opening lines of a document from the 'Archive of Babatha' that was discovered in 1961 in the 'Cave of the Letters' in the vicinity of Naḥal Hever. The first three lines of this bill of sale are (Yadin: 1962: 239):

> (1) *btlth bkslw šnt ʿšryn wtmwnʾ lrbʾl mlkʾ mlk nbṭw dy ʾḥyy wšyzb ʿmh wʿl* (2) *ḥyy ʿbdt br rbʾl mlkʾ mlk nbṭw dy ʾḥyy wšyzb ʿmh wdy gmlt whgrw ʾḥwth mlkt* (3) *nbṭw bny mnkw mlkʾ mlk nbṭw br ḥrtt mlk nbṭw rḥm ʿmh*[2]
>
> *Translation:* On the 3rd of Kislev in the 28th year of king Rabbel (= 99 AD), king of the Nabataeans who brings life and deliverance to his people. And *for the life of* (Yadin: *and in the lifetime of*) Obodas, son of king Rabbel, king of the Nabataeans who brings life and deliverance to his people and that of Gamilat and Hagiru, his sisters, queens of the Nabataeans (*or*: Nabataean princesses), children of king Manku, king of the Nabataeans, son of Aretas, king of the Nabataeans who loves his people . . .

Yadin maintains that the sentence commencing with the formula *wʿl ḥyy* is a continuation and specification of the precise date provided by the foregoing sentence. He argues that: "the expression was used more especially (though not exclusively) in references not to the king, but mainly to members of the royal family, who could not of course be recorded with regnal years" (Yadin 1963: 230). Unfortunately, Yadin, despite his promise, never published this document, which yields the only known instance of the formula in a non-epigraphical setting.

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[1] In translating the formula *ʿl ḥyy* Lindner consistently offers both alternatives: "für das Leben (oder: zu Lebzeiten)", without deciding which of the two applies (Lindner 1980b: 54, 84).

[2] This reading is confirmed by J.C. Greenfield in his correspondence with H.J.W. Drijvers during the summer of 1990. At the latter's request Greenfield re-examined the manuscript. He suggests that the formula may simply be a scribal mistake, since the scribes were used to writing *ʿl ḥyy* instead of *bḥyy*.

It should be noted that there is no need to interpret the copula *w* preceding the formula as connecting the two sentences. It may indicate the start of a new sentence and if this is the case, then the formula is not automatically an extension of the date. It may moreover be asked why one would bother to include the entire royal family for dating a document. The formula makes more sense if it is part of a standard address for official purposes, or, perhaps, of a swearing formula to confer a legal status to the document. However, this suggestion needs to be studied further in the context of the 'Archive' as a whole, as well as in relation to similar documents.

Whatever the case, there are more conclusive arguments demonstrating that Yadin's suggestion that the formula *ʿl ḥyy* should be rendered as *during the lifetime of* in an epigraphical setting too, is incorrect. First of all, in epigraphical contexts *during the lifetime of* occurs as *bḥyy* (DISO: 31).[3] Furthermore, if the formula *ʿl ḥyy* is to be considered in this manner, then it is hard to imagine why in a number of inscriptions the Nabataean king appears twice for dating purposes; initially as the first member of the royal family immediately after the formula and subsequently at the end of the text when a more exact date is provided by reference to the regnant years of that same king.[4] Does the dedicator suddenly feel that he should be more specific about the date when he reaches the end of the text? This is a total misconception of the way in which inscriptions were fabricated. Surely, dedicator and engraver went over the text together before engraving it in stone. Moreover, difficulties arise out of its repeated use. Did the exalted status of the Nabataean king require that he is always mentioned first in any kind of list enumerating members of the royal family during whose lifetime the inscription was executed? Furthermore, what reasons motivated the expansion of the date of an inscription by reference to so many members of the royal family? Perhaps the perception of *during the lifetime of* may be attributed with a semantic value similar to the perception of *for the life of*, i.e. involving honorific connotations.[5]

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[3] Cf. CIS II: 186, 4116, 4119, 4235; Milik (1976: 143).

[4] CIS II: 158 and 354; Starcky and Savignac (1957: 215); Cantineau (1978b: 2); Khairy (1980: 22).

[5] Cf. Bowersock (1983: 80, note 15).

APPENDIX C

SOME REMARKS ON EPITHETHS OF NABATAEAN ROYAL DEITIES

Modifications of deities occur frequently in Nabataean epigraphy. Apart from *ʾlh mdrsʾ* (CIS II: 442) and *ʾlh mnbtw* (Cantineau 1978b: 2), Dusares is also known as *ʾlh gʾyʾ*, *the god of Gaia*, in Oboda, a city in the Negev desert (Negev 1963: 113). A slightly different spelling, *ʾlh gyʾʾ*, is attested in Djof, a city at the south-eastern end of Wadi Sirhan (Savignac and Starcky 1957: 198). Dusares is also known as *ʾʿrʾ*, *Aara*, in Bostra (Cantineau 1978b: 24) and Imtan in the neighbourhood of Bostra (Cantineau 1978b: 21). The latter, moreover, qualifies *Dusares Aara* as *dy bbṣrʾ*, *who dwells in Bostra*. In Hegra 'Aara', also is modified as *dy bbṣrʾ*, but with the amplification *ʾlh rbʾl*, *the god of Rabbel*, it appears by itself (CIS II: 218). Dusares is also modified as *ʾlh mrʾnʾ*, *the god of our lord*. A couple of times Aretas IV is meant (CIS II: 201, 208, 209, 211), and once Rabbel II (Cantineau 1978b: 21). Elsewhere, *ʾlh rbʾl*, *the god of Rabbel*, is directly linked with Dusares (Milik 1958: 231). Also the two are combined to *ʾlh mrʾnʾ rbʾl mlkʾ*, *the god of our lord king Rabbel* (Starcky 1985: 181). Similarly, Baalshamin is modified twice as *ʾlh šʿydw*, *the god of Soaidu* (CIS II: 176) and as *ʾlh mtnw*, *the god of Mattanu* (Cantineau 1978b: 18). It is noteworthy that both names originate from the Hawran.

The god Asdu is once modified as *ʾlh mʿynw*, *the god of Moainu* (RES, no. 2053). In Petra the god Saabu is qualified as *ʾlhʾ dy [b]ʾṣl ḥbtʾ*, *the god who resides in . . . of Hubta* (Cantineau 1978b: 9; Winnett-Reed 1970: 158; DFD: 212).[1] The same god appears to be cited in an inscription from Hegra as well (Winnett-Reed 1970: 157). Although l.3 is badly damaged, its middle part probably reads: *[. . lʾlh ṣ]ʿbw ʾlh[ʾ . .]*, *to the god Saabu*, *the god of*. . . . If this is the case, then Saabu is also in this instance modified as the god of 'somebody' or 'some place'.[2] Provided that the restorations are correct, then Saabu must have commanded considerable authority within the Nabataean pantheon. His presence can be traced at Hegra, Palmyra and Petra, cities somewhat distant from each other. Moreover, a sanctuary was dedicated to Saabu in Petra (Cantineau 1978b: 9; Winnett-Reed 1970: 158), the Nabataean national shrine (Gawlikowski 1975–76), whereas in Palmyra he is described as *the Gad of the Nabataeans* (CIS II: 3991). Again, a god *trʾ* or *tdʾ*, probably though *dwtrʾ* (Starcky 1966: 1000; Wenning 1987: 253), once occurs modified as *ʾlh ḥṭyšw*, *the god of Hotaishu* (CIS II: 354).[3] Finally, on one occasion such a qualification appears alone in order to designate the divine recipient of a dedication without attributing to him a proper name: *ʾlh qṣyw*, *the god of Qasiu* (CIS II: 174).

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[1] According to DISO *ʾṣl* is an architectural *terminus technicus*. Its exact reference is unfortunately unknown (DISO: 22). It may denote both a structure or a particular element of such a structure.

[2] Cf. for Saabu: CIS II: 3991. This inscription was found on a small altar similar to

Now, if it is possible to make a general remark on this limited material, then three observations stand out. Firstly, the modification of Dusares as *ʾlh mrʾnʾ* clearly links him to the Nabataean royal family, especially during the reign of Aretas IV (CIS II: 201, 208, 209, 211) and the last Nabataean king, Rabbel II (Starcky 1985: 181; CIS II: 350 (?); Cantineau 1978b: 21). Once the modification is explicitly linked with Dusares in his manifestation 'Aara' (Cantineau 1978b: 21), whereas it is said that Aara dwelt in Bostra (Cantineau 1978b: 21; CIS II: 218). Cantineau (1978b: 21) is dated by the regnant years of Rabbel II, *ʾlh mrʾnʾ*, *the god of our lord*, referring to Rabbel II. The apposition resembles those found in Starcky (1985: 181), *ʾlh mrʾnʾ rbʾl mlkʾ*, and Milik (1958: 231), *ʾlh rbʾl*, both dated by the regnant years of Rabbel II. However, they both fail to qualify Dusares as 'Aara'.

The modification of *Aara who dwells in Bostra* as *the god of Rabbel* is remarkable, since CIS II: 218 is dated to the first year of king Malichos II, Rabbel II's predecessor.[4] Although it is theoretically possible that the modification 'Aara' as 'the god of Rabbel' should

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the ones offered to the 'Anonymous God' in Palmyra. Interestingly, Saabu is qualified as *dy mqrʾ gdʾ [ʾ]nbṭ*, *who is called the Gad* (or: *Fortune*) *of the Nabataeans.*

[3] Perhaps, the same deity is meant in CIS II: 336: *t[d/r]ʾ* which was found in Taima, north-east of Hegra. Possibly, this deity also occurs in a funerary inscription from Hegra as the god to whom the fine for violating the tomb had to be paid (Cantineau 1978b: 31 = CIS II: 205). If so, however, there is a gender problem, for in CIS II: 354 the god is obviously male, whereas in CIS II: 336 she is definitely female.

[4] Although he dates the inscription to *c.*40 AD, Starcky (1955: 104), followed by Hammond (1973: 29), suggests that the apposition *the god of Rabbel* does not refer to Rabbel II but to Rabbel I. He argues that an expression like 'god of So-and-So' easily becomes traditional and that Rabbel II, bearing the same name as his distant predecessor, adopted 'Aara' as his tutelary deity too. However, it is rather awkward that the designation is not met with at an earlier stage in Nabataean history then, for surely a close relationship between a deity and a monarch affects the relation between the Divine and the monarch's

be considered to be equivalent to that found in, for example, the inscription of Aslah son of Aslah (Cantineau 1978b: 2), later evidence definitely suggests this Rabbel to have been the last Nabataean king of that name. It would appear that for some time before actually assuming the Nabataean throne, Rabbel II entertained a special relationship with the god *Aara who dwells in Bostra.*[5] This is remarkable since the establishment of Bostra as the capital of the Nabataean Empire instead of Petra is generally attributed to the efforts of Rabbel II. The transferral of the capital to the south of the Hawran is usually closely associated with a presumed change in economic policy entailing a shift from an economy based primarily on caravan-trade to one based foremost on agriculture (Negev 1976a: 8; Negev 1977: 639f; Bowersock 1983: 72f; Knauf 1986: 80f).

It has been correctly observed that the removal of the centre of gravity of the Empire from Petra to Bostra under the patronage of Rabbel II was ideologically expressed in the modification of Dusares as 'Aara who dwells in Bostra'. Nevertheless, the recognition of the importance of the Hawran for the economy of the Nabataean Empire and its ideological reinforcement may have been advanced during the reign of Aretas IV. This is, of course, dependent on Malichos II entering into a special relationship with one of the great gods of the Hawran, viz. Baalshamin.[6] The impact of this event may have been so powerful that from then onwards modifying Dusares as 'the god of Rabbel' connotes 'Aara', as in Milik (1958: 231) and Starcky (1985: 181).

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successors. So far, no indication whatsoever has been found to substantiate the argument, although, especially from the reign of Aretas IV onwards, several inscriptions have been discovered. It should further be noted that Rabbel is not described as a king (Bowersock 1983: 73, note 50). If Rabbel I is meant, this is strange. Former rulers of the Empire are usually not only designated as 'king', but their specific epithets are also listed.

[5] If Milik's restoration is correct, a recently found inscription yields the phrase *[lbʿšmyn] ʾlh mnkw*, *to Baa(l)shamin the god of Manku* (Milik 1980b: 25). Since it is dated by the regnant years of Aretas IV, it might parallel CIS II: 218, for Malichos II, indicated here as Manku, succeeded Aretas IV as 'king of the Nabataeans'. However, as he is the second Nabataean ruler of that name, objections similar to the ones advanced for countering the idea that in CIS II: 218 Rabbel II instead of Rabbel I is meant, may be put forward. On the other hand, if indeed Malichos II is meant, then it may be suggested that at least from the reign of Aretas IV onwards there was a custom for the contemplated successor to enter into a special relationship with a particular deity before actually assuming the throne. If this is the case, then it is significant that already before Rabbel II's bond with Dusares 'Aara', Malichos II entertained a special relationship with Baalshamin, another great god originating from the Hawran. Consequently, the importance of the Hawran for the economy of the Nabataean Empire may well have been recognized during Aretas IV's reign.

[6] Cf. previous note. Bowersock (1983: 52), however, considers that *mnkw* (l.1) refers to Malichos I. With the support of Starcky (1971: 156f), he supposes that Aretas IV, being

Dusares may occasionally also have been attributed other qualifications, as in Negev (1963: 113), *dwšrʾ ʾlhʾ gʾyʾ*, whereas Dusares Aara as a deity even appears in an inscription from the time after the Roman annexation (Cantineau 1978b: 24).[7]

In most of the inscriptions referred to, Dusares or 'Aara' or Dusares Aara acts as the recipient of an object of dedication. Contrary to the objects that are epigraphically dedicated with the formula *ʿl ḥyy*, however, there is no explicit reference to any beneficiary. Since the divine recipient has ideologically very close links with the ruling dynasty, politically and, perhaps, socially the dynasty benefits from it. Hence the dedicators express their allegiance to the royal house.

A peculiarity pertaining to Nabataean *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions is that if the divine recipient is a well-known deity like Dusares or Saabu modified in the manner previously discussed, a correlation between the well-known deity and beneficiaries on the one, and a similar correlation between dedicators and the deity's modification on the other hand seems to exist. Besides Cantineau (1978b: 2), the Aslah-inscription, this phenomenon occurs in Cantineau (1978b: 9), and possibly in CIS II: 442 found at el-Madras in Petra as well as another inscription originating from Hegra (Winnett-Reed 1970: 157). The Aslah-inscription qualifies Dusares as *ʾlh mnbtw, the god of Manbatu.* CIS II: 442 presumably qualifies him as *ʾlh mdrsʾ, the god of Madras.* In addition, Saabu, the *Gad of the Nabataeans*, is modified as *ʾlhʾ dy [b]ʾṣl ḥbtʾ, the god who resides in . . . of Hubta* (Cantineau 1978b: 9 and probably Winnett-Reed 1970: 157). Whether these modifications refer to a particular ancestor or to a particular locality, it is decisive that they are connected with a particular group of people, an epitome of which expresses allegiance to the Nabataean king. The equation of these specific gods with one of the great gods of the Nabataean pantheon, reinforces the pledge of allegiance as well as the ensuing presentation and representation of Nabataean authority. The same holds true for CIS II: 354, if the statue is identified as that of the deified king Obodas.[8]

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a newcomer on the Nabataean throne, launched a campaign in order to trace his descent from Obodas II's predecessor Malichos I.

[7] An inscription from Salkhad in the Hawran records the dedication of an object to the goddess Allat who is modified as *ʾm ʾlhy[ʾ] dy [mr]ʾnʾ rbʾl, the mother of the gods of our lord Rabbel* (CIS II: 185). Although it is not explicitly dated, the employment of the title *mrʾnʾ*, which appears rather late in Nabataean epigraphy, suggests that the inscription belongs to the reign of Rabbel II.

[8] However, cf. Appendix E.

Dedicatory inscriptions from the Hawran similarly modify Baalshamin. If, like Rabbel II with Dusares Aara and possibly Aretas IV with Dusares, Malichos II who reigned between *c.*40 and *c.*70 AD, entertained a special relationship with Baalshamin (Milik 1980b: 25), then Cantineau (1978b: 18) modifying Baalshamin as *ʾlh mtnw*, *the god of Mattanu*, may be likewise interpreted. Similarly, in RES, no. 2053 the god Asdu is modified as *ʾlh mʿynw*, *the god of Moainu*. Finally, this phenomenon might apply to CIS II: 174 if the well-known god who is modified as *ʾlh qṣyw*, *the god of Qasiu*, is epigraphically understated and his identity is obvious from the context in which this dedication was originally made.

The third observation may substantiate the claim that Petra actually functioned as a type of centralized Nabataean national shrine. Modifications of Dusares as *the god of Manbatu* or *the god of Madras*, or of Saabu as *the god who resides in . . . of Hubta* strongly favour such an idea. Both of these well-known deities were intricately linked with the Nabataean Empire. Therefore, it is significant that tribal divinities or family gods were first equated with them and subsequently allotted a particular space amongst them within the national shrine.

APPENDIX D

THE MEANING OF *ʾḥ* AND *ʾḥt* IN THE NABATAEAN CONTEXT

Despite the fact that DISO yields correct definitions, *ʾḥ* and *ʾḥt* are often interpreted very rigidly as 'brother' and 'sister' in a physical sense when the Nabataean royal family is concerned. Inevitably, this leads to a total misconception of personal relationships between its members. For example, it has been recurrently suggested that: "wie die Ptolemäer, heirateten die letzten nabatäischen Könige vielleicht ihre Schwestern oder Halbschwestern, um das Blut der Dynastie rein zu halten" (Lindner 1980b: 79). From the inscription found in Milete in which Syllaios, Obodas II's dissident vizier, calls himself *ʾḥ mlkʾ*, *the king's brother*, it has been proposed that Syllaios belonged to the royal family, which incited his aspirations for grasping the Nabataean crown (Cantineau 1978b: 45). Although Syllaios may have been a member of the royal family, this fact can not be inferred from this particular qualification. It is more probable that whenever the notions *ʾḥ* and *ʾḥt* are related to the Nabatean king, their intent is either classificatory, a very common feature in tribal or segmentary society, or, more specific, honorific. If the latter applies, they were used as titles that eventually developed as court convention (Bowersock 1983: 63).

Anthropological research has amply demonstrated that in tribal or segmentary society kinship-terminology is frequently employed to indicate social relationships between members of the same group, clan or tribe, even if the implied physical relations are completely absent. Kinship-terminology serves to define membership of a particular group and consequently is used in a classificatory way. Qualifications as *ʾḥ mlkʾ* and *ʾḥt mlkʾ* may simply denote that a person is attached to the royal 'house'. It may even be of minor importance whether this particular person physically belongs to the royal family or whether he or she is only a servant. In the Nabataean context, however, there are indications that they imply a certain status and, therefore, should be considered as honorific titles.

The modification *ʾḥt mlkʾ* does not occur. Very often, though, its purport is implied by the use of a suffix attached to the word *ʾḥt*, relating it to the king (CIS II: 354; Khairy 1980: 22; Cantineau 1978b: 9; Yadin 1963: 230). The designation *ʾḥth* is usually immediately followed by the qualification *mlkt nbṭw*, *queen* (better: *princess*) *of the Nabataeans*. Only very seldom does *ʾḥth* occur by itself (Savignac 1933: 408). The apposition appears under conditions in which it is improbable that the physical relationship defined by the word *ʾḥt* actually existed. However, it can be assumed that it describes the relationship between half-siblings, as is illustrated by Cantineau (1978b: 9) in which king Rabbel II (l.6) is the prime beneficiary. Gamilat and Hagiru are listed next, being qualified as *ʾḥwt[h m]lkt nbṭw bny mlkw [mlk]ʾ mlk nbṭw*, *his sisters, princesses of the Nabataeans, children of king Malichos, king of the Nabataeans* (ll.7–8). It may be maintained that the two princesses are genuine sisters of king Rabbel, who himself descends from king Malichos. However, the list of beneficiaries continues with Qosmail and Saudat, who are also qualified as *ʾḥwth mlkt nbṭw* (l.9). It is doubtful whether they are also siblings of Rabbel II, especially since they are not described as descending from king Malichos. If they did, it would have been more natural to list them along with Gamilat and Hagiru, rather than mentioning them separately. If, on the other hand, they are Rabbel II's half-sisters, then it is conspicuous that they are qualified in the very same manner as his genuine sisters. This implies that no difference in status was perceived between the king's full sisters and his half-sisters.

L.9 may also be interpreted in combination with l.10, leading to a totally different conception. The first part of l.10 is missing but, according to Cantineau, the lacuna comprises about 16 characters, four of which may be restored with a great amount of certainty. L.10 ends with *bn[y] rbʾl wgmlt whgrw [ ]*, *children of Rabbel and Gamilat and Hagiru*, before which the name *[m]lk[w]* can be restored. This suggests that the first part of l.10 enumerates a number of persons, who, in turn, are qualified as *children of Rabbel and Gamilat and Hagiru*. L.9 ends with *wʿ[l]*, *and for*, inciting that l.10 starts with *[ḥyy]*, *the life of*, from which it may be inferred that the information initiated in l.9 continues in l.10. In that case, ll.9–10 consist of the enumeration of the children of the three royal siblings, known as *the children of king Malichos, in casu* Rabbel, Gamilat and Hagiru. A repeated *wʿl ḥyy* may have indicated that those mentioned after each formula descend from a different parent. In that case, it is out of the question that *ʾḥwth* (l.9) indicates sisters or half-sisters of Rabbel II, because they either descend from himself or from one of his sisters.

Thus, they are either his own children or his nieces. Since they are qualified as *ʾḥwth*, immediately followed by *mlkt nbṭw*, it is all the more plausible that like the latter, the former denotes a certain status without having a bearing on the physical relationship between the king and the female concerned. However, theoretically, this is no positive proof that the later Nabataean kings did not marry their blood sisters. Indeed, the text still leaves the possibility open for the children in ll.9–10 to have been conceived from Rabbel's sexual intercourse with his sisters, but it does suggest, that the designation *ʾḥt* is used more broadly in the context of the Nabataean royal house than that of strictly indicating a physical relationship.

In contrast with the title *mlkʾ nbṭw*, *king of the Nabataeans*, which is reserved for one male person at the time, *mlkt nbṭw*, *queen* (better: *princess*) *of the Nabataeans*, may simultaneously apply to more than one female member (Starcky 1971: 156). It is unlikely that it indicates that the females belonged to the royal harem, providing that the Nabataean king was polygamous. This proposition might be advanced where the females concerned are known to be the king's nieces, as in Cantineau (1978b: 9). It even might be upheld when the females are the king's siblings. However, it becomes highly improbable, when the reigning king's granddaughters are proven to carry the title as well, as in Khairy (1980: 22). This line of argument may be substantiated by an Edessene inscription which cites a female as *šlmt mlktʾ brt mʿnu pṣgrybʾ*, *Shalmat, the princess, daughter of Maanu, the Crown Prince* (Drijvers 1972: 21). In this instance, *mlktʾ* obviously implies nothing more than that she belongs to the royal family.

The title *ʾḥ mlkʾ*, *brother of the king*, does not feature in the epigraphical record from the Nabataean heartland and its immediate surroundings. It is found only in the inscription from Milete. A similar, so far unpublished, inscription was found on Delos (Starcky 1966: 913; Lindner 1980b: 68). On account of these two specimens, it has been proposed that Syllaios was a full, or perhaps a half-brother, to king Obodas. Hence he felt free to lay a claim on the Nabataean throne. Strabo, however, reports on Nabataean rule that:

> ἔχει δ᾽ ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐπίτροπον τῶν ἑταίρων τινά, καλούμενον ἀδελφόν
>
> *The king has as Administrator one of his companions, who is called brother* (*Geography* XVI, 4:21).

Presumably, the Nabataean king appointed someone from the élite members of his court who acted as his confidant and lieutenant, who was not necessarily his full brother. Consequently, the title 'brother' which is ascribed conveys a certain status on its bearer (Bowersock 1983: 53).

Besides Syllaios, no holders of this undoubtedly important office are known, unless the qualification of a certain Onaishu in CIS II: 351 (= Cantineau 1978b: 8), originating from Petra, as *ʾḥ šqylt mlkt nbṭw, brother of Shoqailat, the Nabataean princess*, is also held to refer to it (Wenning 1987: 284). However, three suppositions have to be substantiated. Firstly, it must be established that like *mlkʾ*, the title *ʾḥ mlkʾ* is reserved for one male person at the time. Secondly, it should be demonstrated that the title is employed in relation to the king only and not simultaneously to other members of the royal family. When related to the king the title undoubtedly confers the highest status, but it is possible that, when applied to other members of the royal family, a lower status is achieved.[1] Thirdly, it must be demonstrated that as the queen-mother Shoqailat temporarily fulfilled the king's duties for her infant-son Rabbel II, and that she, on account of that, was entitled to render meaning to the title *ʾḥ mlkʾ*. This last request may be answered by numismatic evidence. Coinage from approximately the first five years of Rabbel II's reign frequently shows him accompanied by his mother Shoqailat II (Lindner 1980b: 80). This is not sufficient proof for completely ruling out the possibility that elsewhere the designation was employed not only in relation to the king, but also to other members of the royal family. Hence the title should be conceived of indeed as *confidant* (of a member of the royal family) by which it conveys a certain, though not always identical, status on its bearer.

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[1] Negev (1977: 593) suggests that the designation 'brother' should be interpreted as "attendant of the queen". However, he fails to indicate whether this applies when the title is reserved for one person at the time or whether more members of the court are entitled to carry it; each example being defined with reference to that member of the royal family it accompanies.

APPENDIX E

OBODAS THE GOD

Although there is some dispute about which of the Nabataean kings called Obodas is actually deified, whether it is Obodas I (*c*.96–87 BC) or Obodas II (*c*. 30–8 BC) or perhaps a third Obodas who, if at all, must have ruled somewhere in the middle of the first century BC (Starcky 1966: 911; Lindner 1980a: 107), it is generally agreed that this phenomenon did take place.[1] Stephen of Byzantium, living in the sixth or seventh centuries AD, is the main source of this opinion. He relates: "Oboda, a place of Nabateans. Uranius [writes] in his fourth volume on the Arabs 'where king Obodas, who is deified, is buried'" (Negev 1986: 59; Starcky 1955: 95). In spite of the recurrent claim made by Negev (1986: 59) and Lindner (1980b: 70), that this assertion can epigraphically be sustained, there is no evidence. Inscriptions and graffiti do mention a certain deity by the name of Obodas.[2] It even is likely that he was particularly worshipped in Oboda, a town *c*.60 km north-west of Petra in the Negev-desert, for Greek graffiti found in the ruins of a Nabataean temple read Θεῷ Οβοδα and Ζεῦ Οβοδα (Negev 1986: 59).[3] In addition, a short invocation reading *ḥy ʿbdt*, *Obodas lives*, is inscribed in the vicinity of a burial cave not far from a 'high-place' (RES, no. 527). However, it is by no means obvious, that this exclamation refers to a deified king. Indeed, it may honour a reigning king or a god. It may even just refer to someone who has the name Obodas.

Worship of the god Obodas was not just restricted to Oboda and its immediate surrounds. An inscription originating from Petra exhorts to remember the *mrzḥ ʿbdt ʾlh*, *the cult-association of the god Obodas* (Cantineau 1978b: 7). None of the inscriptions and graffiti positively confirms Stephen's statement that this deity is to be identified with the former Nabataean king.

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[1] Publications favouring Obodas II are: Starcky (1955: 95), Hammond (1973: 103f), Negev (1976a: 56), Negev (1977: 594), Lindner (1980b: 69ff). Publications favouring Obodas I are: Starcky (1966: 906), Bowersock (1971: 237), Cantineau (1978a: 6).

[2] Cf. CIS II: 354; Cantineau (1978b: 7); Negev (1986: 57); idem (1991: 62f).

[3] Negev (1977: 659) dates these graffiti to the second and third centuries AD.

Three disparate elements: the fact that 'Obodas' is a name used by the Nabataean royal family, and the fact that a deity of obscure origins, called Obodas, features in the Nabataean pantheon, and the fact that a city called Oboda is found in the Negev-desert, may have been combined to found a tradition similar to that related by Stephen of Byzantium. It is conceivable that the god Obodas lent his name to both the Nabataean kings and the city.[4] In addition, Stephen remarks that Oboda is the place of burial of king Obodas. However, if Obodas II is concerned, it is more likely that he was entombed in Petra, like other later Nabataean kings (Wenning 1987: 160). Indeed, by the time of his death, Petra was rapidly earning the status of a national shrine next to that of an imperial political and economic centre. It has even been suggested that the Nabataeans underwent considerable trouble to entomb their fellow-tribesmen in one of the acknowledged centres like Petra and Hegra. Petra, of course ranked as the supreme burial-ground (Negev 1977: 590f). From this point of view it seems enigmatic that a king chose to be buried elsewhere.

Most of the commentators complying with Stephen's statement consider Obodas II (*c*.30–8 BC) as being deified. Some of them admit, though, that it is almost inconceivable that he deserved such an honour (Starcky 1966: 906; Lindner 1980b: 69). Strabo relates that: "... Obodas, the king, did not care much about public affairs, and particularly military affairs ..." (*Geography* XVI, 4: 24). Josephus, moreover, has it that: "The king of Arabia, Obodas, was inactive and sluggish by nature; for the most part his realm was governed by Syllaeus, who was a clever man, still young and handsome" (*Ant. Jud.* XVI: 220); and elsewhere: "But Syllaeus, who had set Obodas aside and was in charge of everything, ..." (*Ant. Jud.* XVI: 280). By contrast, neither Josephus nor Strabo mention anything about the deification of this Obodas. Such an absence is conspicuous, for its inclusion would have enhanced the drama of their respective accounts. It is all the more noteworthy, then, that several commentators point at a similar and parallel development with respect to the newly established imperial house in Rome to substantiate their identification of Obodas II as the Nabataean king who was deified (Hammond 1973: 104; Lindner 1980b: 71).[5] Even if Obodas II was bestowed with such honours, there is no indication that his successors were implicated in this glorious fate. Therefore, the suggestion that the Nabataean and the Roman practice of deifying defunct rulers developed along parallel lines is misleading. If Obodas II indeed was deified, it is an exceptional incident, rather than a common practice.[6] From what Strabo and Josephus relate about the nature of his reign, it has been occasionally suggested that Obodas II dedicated himself to religious matters, leaving politics and related affairs to his vizier Syllaios. This is a total misconception of rule in the ancient world, which is characterized by an intricate entwining of leadership in all distinct spheres of public life.

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[4] Wenning (1987: 160) suggests a similar interpretation of the available data.

[5] Kammerer (1929–30: 461) points to a parallel development in the Roman and Nabataean Empires and, thus insists that there is no indication that predecessors of Obodas II were deified.

In summary, neither the arguments in favour of nor those against the deification of defunct rulers of the Nabataeans are decisive. Still, it is more plausible that a deity lent its name to both kings and cities than that the god Obodas developed from a deified king.[7]

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[6] Hammond (1973: 103) is reluctant to implicate other Nabataean kings apart from Obodas II in the bestowal of divine honours. He does not, however, challenge the idea that Obodas II was actually deified.

[7] If my reservations about the deification of Nabataean kings are correct and the god Obodas is a regular deity, then the proper name *ʿbdʿbdt*, *Abdobodat*, frequently occurring in Nabataean epigraphy, contains a genuine theophorous element. However, in Nabataean onomastics names of kings more often take the place of the theophorous element, as in *ʿbdḥrtt*, *Abdhartat*, and *ʿbdmlkw*, *Abdmalku*. This is no evidence for the deification of kings, as advanced by Starcky (1966: 1015). Rather it is a parental expression of support for the royal family. As such these names constitute pledges of allegiance to central authority. It does testify, however, to the exalted status of the Nabataean royal family.

APPENDIX F

PALMYRENE DEDICATORY INSCRIPTIONS ON INCENSE-BURNERS

Appendix F enumerates Palmyrene dedicatory inscriptions in which the ‘Anonymous God’ acts as a divine recipient. Except for four examples they are attached to small altars (±50–75 cm high; ±25–40 cm wide; ±25–40 cm deep) designed for burning frankincense. In most of them the formula *ʿl ḥyy*, *for the life of*, is a constituent part (List 1). Concomitantly, beneficiaries are listed; usually the dedicator himself and a number of people related to him in terms of kinship. In a minority the formula is lacking and with it the listing of beneficiaries (List 2).

A small number of inscriptions do not use the usual phrase *bryk šmh lʿlmʾ* for indicating the ‘Anonymous God’, but one or more epithets that are almost exclusively applied to him, e.g. *the Merciful*, *rḥmnʾ*, and *the Compassionate*, *tyrʾ*. The latter exclusively refers to the ‘Anonymous God’, whilst the former is used once for qualifying the god Azizu (CIS II: 3974) and a couple of times for Baalshamin (CIS II: 3988, 3989) and Cantineau (1930: 11) as well. Furthermore, twice the epithet *the Good*, *ṭbʾ*, is employed. However, CIS II: 4023 is so incomplete that other epithets or even the usual indication *bryk šmh lʿlmʾ* may originally have featured here to preclude any ambiguity about the divine recipient. In CIS II: 4053 the dedication is motivated with *for he has called upon Him and He has answered him*, *dy qr lh wʿnyh*, a phrase that elsewhere occurs explicitly only in association with the ‘Anonymous God’ or implicitly in association with epithets exclusively referring to him (Lists 3 and 4).

Furthermore, lists are presented of inscriptions attached to objects similar to those dedicated to the ‘Anonymous God’ that either are badly damaged or, for other reasons, do not present a divine recipient and in which the formula *ʿl ḥyy* may also be absent (List 5).

A number of Greek and bilingual inscriptions with a badly damaged Palmyrene part are dedicated to Διὶ ὑψίστῳ καὶ ἐπηκόῳ, *the Highest and Answering Zeus* (List 6). In other bilingual inscriptions this phrase only applies to Baalshamin (Cantineau 1930: 11; *Dunant*, no. 25—

Palmyrene: *mrʾ ʿlmʾ*, *Lord of Eternity*, an epithet of Baalshamin—; Hassani and Starcky 1957: 101 and 102) and to the 'Anonymous God' (CIS II: 3994, 3998, 4031, and 4066; Cantineau 1933: 188). In the absence of further indications, it is likely that the Anonymous God' acts as the divine recipient here too. This suggestion is reinforced by the close relationship between these deities (Gawlikowski 1990b: 2632ff). Inscriptions attached to identical objects of dedication but explicitly mentioning divine recipients other than the 'Anonymous God' make up only a small list (lists 7 and 8).

A final category includes inscriptions attached to similar objects of dedication originating from the Palmyrena; first those employing the formula *ʿl ḥyy* or a Greek equivalent, then those without any formula (lists 9 and 10). The distinction between divine recipients is incorporated into the list.

Sigla and abbreviations: Key

Horizontal arrangement:

InsNum = number of the inscription
Prov = provenance of the inscription; the find-spot
Date = date of the inscription
C(om) = completeness of the inscription
S(cu) = presence of sculpture that may hint at the identity of the divine recipient
Recipient = divine recipient(s)
Dedicator = dedicator(s)
Benefic. = beneficiaries
EP. = epigraphical peculiarities

Perpendicular arrangement:

InsNum: C.3992 = CIS II, no. 3992 (numbers vary according to inscription)
XI.2 = *Inv.*XI, no. 2; Roman figure = Volume; Arabic figure = number of inscription
H3.146 = Hassani and Starcky (1953) + page number
H7.97 = Hassani and Starcky (1957) + page number
Du.27 = *Dunant*, no. 27 (numbers vary according to inscription)
RSP134 = *RSP* + number inscription

IG2697 = *IGLS*, no. 2697 (numbers vary according to inscription)
PNO.16 = *PNO*, no. 16 (numbers vary according to inscription)
DM.7 = al-Asad and Teixidor (1985c) + number inscription
Caq.57 = Caquot (1985) + page number
St.M52 = Starcky (1949a) + page number
Ing104 = Ingholt (1936) + page number
Sey317 = Seyrig (1939) + page number
Can.37 = Cantineau (1930) + page number
CaS135 = Cantineau (1931) + page number
SCa188 = Cantineau (1933) + page number
Can348 = Cantineau (1936) + page number
SyC.80 = Cantineau (1938) + page number

Prov: Bel = found in or in the vicinity of the temple of Bel
Baal = found in or in the vicinity of the temple of Baalshamin
Efqa = found in the vicinity of the Source Efqa
DamG = found in the vicinity of the Damascus Gate
DC = found in the Camp of Diocletian
GC = found along the 'Great Colonnade'
NW = found in the vicinity of the northern city-wall
WW = found in the vicinity of the western city-wall
PU = found in or in the vicinity of the city proper without indication of its original provenance: Provenance Unknown or Palmyra Unknown
Pal = Palmyrena
Naz = Nazala (Qaryatein)
Dms = Damascus

Date: the date is given according to Seleucid Era

C(om): Y = the inscription is complete
N = the inscription is not complete
Y/N = the inscription is not complete but can be plausibly restored

S(cu): Y = a sculptural device is present

Recipient: Agl = Aglibol
Mal = Malakbel
Baal = Baalshamin
Ab = Abgal
AG = Anonymous God

GN = *w'ḥyh gny' [ṭby]' wškry'*: and his brother, the Good and Rewarding Genii
MN = θεῷ Μεγάλῳ Ναζαλῶν
D = Διὶ : Zeus
Ep = ἐπηκόῳ: Answering
Up = ὑψίστῳ: Highest
ṭ = *ṭb'*: the Good
s/š = *s/škr'*: the Rewarding
r = *rḥmn'*: the Merciful
t = *tyr'*: the Compassionate
g.ʿ.b. = *gd' dy ʿyn' brykt'*: the *genius* of the Blessed Source

Dedicator: b = *br*: son
bs! = a number of brothers indicated by name
br ḥry = freed male slave
brt ḥry = freed female slave
rḥmwhy = his friends
* = indicates that the (co)dedicator is female

for other abbreviations used in this column see:

Benefic. d = dedicator
ds = dedicators
s = son(s)
da = daughter(s)
c = children
b = brother(s)
si = sister(s)
w = wife
h = husband
f = father
m = mother
u = uncle
bs = brother's son(s)
ss = son's son(s)
bbk = *bny byth klh*: all the people of his 'house'
bb = *bny byth*: the people of his 'house'
bk = *byth klh*: his entire 'house'
fr = friend(s)
! = behind a symbol indicates that the beneficiaries or some of them are not only described in terms of kinship but are also referred to by their personal name

EP.:

slab = inscription engraved on a slab instead of altar

bil. = bilingual inscription

Greek = Greek inscription

+ lyqr = the formula *lyqr* is appended to the formula *ʿl ḥyy*

dkyr = the formula *dkyr*, *may be remembered*, is appended to the formula *ʿl ḥyy*

dkrn = the dedication is described as *dkrn (ṭb)*, *(good) remembrance*

Q = (part of) the expression *dy qr lh wʿnyh*, *who has called upon Him and He has answered him*, features in the inscription

Εὐχή = the dedication is described as εὐχή, *prayer, votive-offering*

Ευ = εὐξάμενος: *participium aoristi medium*: *having promised* (thus: the dedication is presented as a votive-offering) or *showing gratitude* (which is almost the same)

E = ἐπακουσθεὶς: *participium aoristi passive*: *having been answered* (thus: the dedication is the reaction of the dedicator to the deity's reaction arising from the request of the dedicator)

LIST 1

Incense-burners dedicated to the 'Anonymous God' with an inscription containing the formula *ʿl ḥyy*.

InsNum	Prov	Date	Com	Scu	Dedicator	Benefic.	EP.
C.3992	PU	414	Y/N		zbdlh b mqymw ṭm[ys]	d+s	
C.3993	PU	423	N	Y	[ ]d' b zbdʿth b ḥld[ ]	d+s	dkrn
C.3996	PU	437	Y/N		prnk br ḥry lšmš b šmšgrm [w]nrqys br ḥry ml' brp'	ds+ s	
C.3999	PU	447	Y		šlmn b nš' b ḥyr' brq	d+s	
XI.2	PU	448	Y		lšmšy b tym' lšmšy	s!	
XI.4	PU	450	Y		ʿbny	d+s!	dkrn
XI.47	Bel	450	N		?	s	
Caq.57	PU	453	Y		zbdʿth b ḥggw b brʿthʿlybʿl	d+s+b	dkrn
C.4000	PU	454	Y		ʿbnrgl br ḥry tym' b ʿnn	d+s!	dkrn
XII.46	Efqa	460	N		šqy b brʿ' b [ ] b ʿgylw b zbdbwl	ds+?+s	bil.
C.4001	PU	472	N		[ ] br ḥry [ ]	+w!	dkrn
St.M52	DamG	486	Y		yrḥy b ḥlpt' b yrḥy b ḥlpt'	d+w!+s+b	
C.4004	PU	488	Y/N		ḥyrn b mqymw b yrḥy	d+s	

InsNum	Prov	Date	Com	Scu	Dedicator	Benefic.	EP.
XI.6	PU	493	N		krsm’ b ḥ[ ] zbd‘th b[ ]	d+s+b + bbk	dkrn
C.4007	Bel	501	Y		ydy‘bl b zbd’ lšmš myšn	d + bs	
H3.146	Efqa	502	Y		mqymw b ’wḥk’	d + s + b	
C.4008	PU	502	Y	Y	whb’ b mlkw ml’	d + b	
C.4009	PU	503	N		[ḥl]pwn’ b zbd’ wb[ ]	d + bk	
C.4011	Efqa	510	N		[t]ym’ [ ]	d + mrwhy + ?	Q
C.4012	PU	514	N		[ ] ‘wd’l	d + s	
C.4013	Bel	516	Y/N		hrms bsm br ḥry mlkw b whb’	d + s	
H3.148	Efqa	517	Y		tymrṣw [b] ḥyrn zbd’	d + s	
Du.27	Baal	518	Y/N		qrynw [b m]l’ qrynw	d + s	
C.4014	PU	518	Y		mky brt ‘g’ ’tt ml’ b mlkw*	d + da	
C.4015	Bel	518	N		[ ]nbwz’ b nš’	d + s!	
RSP134	DC	521	Y		brny b b‘ly ‘bd‘y’ mry	d + bbk	
DM.7	Efqa	524	Y		šm ‘wn b [’w]šy	d + f + m + b	
C.4017	Bel	527	Y		bwḥ’ b šmšgrm	d + m + b + bs	
XI.16	PU	527	Y		bwn’ ‘g’ gbyns	d + bb	Q
H3.152	Efqa	530	Y		tymrṣw b bryky	d + b	
XI.13	Bel	530	N		ḥyrn ṭly’ [ ] b m‘y’	d + s mrwhy	
Can348	PU	530	Y		‘tnwry b tym‘’ ḥl’ b ‘tnwry	d + s	+ lyqr
C.4018	PU	530	Y/N		mqy + brothers b yrḥy b zbyd’ ’lpy	m + ds + si	
XI.14	PU	532	N		[ ] brsmy’	d + m!	
C.4021	PU	533	Y		mrywn b zbdbwl b mlkw	d + b	
H3.152	Efqa	535	N		[ ]m b ‘bnrgl	d + s	
H3.153	Efqa	537	Y		zbyd’ b whblt byd’ ‘py	d + s + b	
C.4024	Bel	539	Y		mqymw b gy	d + m + b	
C.4026	PU	540	Y/N		tymrṣw b whblt b tymrṣw	d + b + bb	
C.4027	PU	541	Y		btzbyd’ brt gdrṣw*	d + h!	
H3.154	Efqa	542	N		two or more dedicators	ds + s	
C.4029	Bel	542	Y		kyly b y‘qwb tymrṣw dbyḥt’	d + b	
C.4028	PU	542	Y		whblt b srykw	d + s	
C.4030	PU	543	Y		ḥggw b yhyb’ b yrḥy rp’	d + f + b	
DM.6	Efqa	544	N		yrḥybw[l’ b] wšlwm brth*	ds	
RSP135	DC	547	Y	Y	whblt b tymrṣw b mlkw	d + s	slab
C.4032	PU	547	Y/N		mqymw b yml’	d + b!	
C.4033	PU	547	Y		zbyd’ b mlkw zbyd’ ‘b’	d + bb	
XII.34	GC	550	Y		‘gylw b mlwk’ wyrḥy ’ḥw	ds + s	
C.4035	PU	550	Y		gd’ b ḥly’	d + s + grh	
C.4036	PU	551	Y		zbdbwl b mlkw zbdbwl ’trmsyn	d + s + bbk	
C.4036	PU	?	Y		mlkw b zbdbwl b mlkw ’trmsyn	d + f	
C.4038	PU	551	Y		š‘dw b mlkw ḥss	d + s	Q
H3.154	Efqa	551	N		yrḥy b šlmw	d + f + b	Q
H3.156	Efqa	551	Y	Y	yrḥbwl’ b mqymw yml’ + s!	d + s + b	
H3.158	Efqa	552	Y		mlk’ w‘t‘y b ḥggw b mlky zwzy	ds + s	
C.4039	PU	552	N		yrḥb[wl’ b yr]ḥbwl’ hyq[ ]	s!+b	

InsNum	Prov	Date	Com	Scu	Dedicator	Benefic.	EP.
H3.159	Efqa	555	Y	Y	ḥyrn b yml’ mqymw	d+f+u+b	
H3.160	Efqa	555	Y		ml’ b [y]hyb’ ‘nn	d+s	
XI.17	PU	557	N		[ ]t b [ ]’	bbk	Q
XI.18	PU	559	N		ml’ b bwṭn	d+s	
C.4044	PU	560	Y		‘gylw b ‘bdlt b ‘rby	d+f+b	
C.4045	PU	560	N		[ ]’ b zbwd	d+f+b	
H7.97	Bel	563	Y/N		qryn b ḥyrn b yrḥbwl’ +s!	d+b	
C.4046	PU	564	Y		mqy b lšmš	s	Q
XI.19	PU	568	N		[ ] b zbwdw b ‘b’	d+b	Q
C.4050	Bel	572	N		ḥggw b yhyb’ yrḥy rp’	d+f+b+bs	
XI.20	PU	574	Y		yrḥbwl’ b yrḥbwl’ ‘rg’	f+bbk	
H7.97	Efqa	-	N		’qmt*	d+s	
XI.7	Efqa	-	N		šlmlt b tym’	d+b+s	
DM.4	Efqa	-	Y?		ml’	d	
Can.37	PU	-	N		[ ]b ‘gylw b mlkw	d+s+?	
RSP136	DC	-	N		pplys ’lys khy[ly b] m‘ny b khyly b[r]	d+s	
RSP138	DC	-	N/Y?		mlkw b nbwzbd mqym	d+s	
RSP144	DC	-	N		lšmšy b lšmš b ’dynt	d+s	
RSP145	DC	-	N		’ns b whblt	d+s	slab
C.4081	Bel	-	Y?		hrms w’mtbl*	s!	
DM.9	NW	-	N		šlm[ ] b rwmn’	d+s	
C.4002	PU	-	N		[ ]dny w‘lyw b ‘štrg’ b dny[ ]	ds?+s	
C.4056	PU	-	N		ydy b h[ ] wlšmš b š[ ] ’ḥwh	ds+m+s	
C.4057	PU	-	N		sws’ b lšmš b ‘gylw b tym’	d	
C.4058	PU	-	N		mqymw b yrḥbwl’ b [gml’]	da!	
C.4059	PU	-	N		ns’ b ns’ b rp’l	?	
C.4060	PU	-	N	Y	yd‘w b ‘gylw b yd‘w	d+s	
C.4061	PU	-	N		mrwn’ b ḥdwdn b mrwn’	d+f+b+fr	
C.4063	PU	-	N		mktš b whblt b [ ]	d+b	
C.4064	PU	-	N		[ ] b mqy	d+s	
C.4065	PU	-	N		pṣy’l b zm[ ]	d+?	
C.4066	PU	-	N		[ḥyrn] b srykw ḥy[rn]	d?+?	bil.
C.4068	PU	-	N		’sḥ[t]	d+srykw	
C.4069	PU	-	N		mqy ḥbḥ’	d+w+s	
C.4072	PU	-	N		mlkw wyrḥbwl’ brh dy ’ḥwhy	d+b	
C.4074	PU	-	N	Y	[ ]mlh’ whrmz*	s	
C.4077	PU	-	N		‘gylw b ḥyr[n]	d+?	
C.4078	PU	-	N		mqymw b zbdbwl b ḥbry	d+s	
C.4079	PU	-	N		‘g’ b zbdbwl b [ ]	d+?	
C.4087	PU	-	N		[ ]rbn’*	d+?	
C.4088	PU	-	N	Y	pṣy’l [b ty]m’ b[r]	d+?+b	
XI.3	PU	-	N		?	?	dkrn
XI.8	PU	-	N		[ ] b zbd’ w[ ]	d+bk	
XI.9	PU	-	N		gdy’ b yrḥy b gd’	d+?	
XI.23	PU	-	N		‘l’ brt zbyd’ b ‘t‘y rp’*	d+h!+s?	
XI.24	PU	-	N	Y	tqym*	d+s	dkrn
XI.27	PU	-	N		[ ] zbd’ b ḥyrn	d+?	

InsNum	Prov	Date	Com	Scu	Dedicator	Benefic.	EP.
XI.28	PU	-	N		zbyd’ b šg’ ’klb	d+b+s!	dkrn
XI.29	PU	-	N		kytwt b kytwt	d?+?	
XI.31	PU	-	N	Y	[ ] b syw[ ]’	?	
XI.32	PU	-	N		[ ] b bs’ nhtwm’	d+s	
XI.34	PU	-	N	Y	zb[yd’ b] zbyd’ b zb[yd’]	s	
XI.36	PU	-	N		zbdbwl b [ ]whb’	d+?	
Can.19	PU	-	N		m‘ny b yrḥy [ ]	d+?	

LIST 2

Incense-burners dedicated to the ‘Anonymous God’ without the formula *‘l ḥyy* in the accompanying inscription.

InsNum	Prov	Date	Com	Scu	Dedicator	Benefic.	EP.
XII.43	Efqa	439	Y		blḥmwn wmnwt MK ‘t‘qb b ḥyrn	MK=mn kys	
C.3997	PU	440	Y/N		zbyd’ b zbdbl ydy‘bl	byth	
DM.11	NW	474	Y		mhr		
XI.5	PU	476	Y		td’l BH bss b m‘nw b ’rqṭws*	BH=brt ḥry	
C.4005	PU	490	N		šlm’ [ ]		
C.4006	PU	490	Y/N		ḥnt’ brt ‘wyd*	d+tymrṣw wbwrp’	
RSP137	DC	500	Y		’lhbl b br‘th mqymw ’klb		
DM.10	NW	500	Y		’ytybl b ‘g’ b tymrṣw ‘rgn		
XII.31	GC	520	Y/N		šm‘wn b m‘n b šm‘wn ḥm’		dkrn
C.4016	PU	524	Y		rdwn b hrmsyn’		
H3.149	Efqa	529	Y		mlk wdms ’ḥyh + bbk		
H3.151	Efqa	529	Y		ml’ b ‘g’ ns’ rb’		
C.4020	PU	532	Y/N		dwmnyn’ brt ydy‘bl br yrḥy*		Q
C.4022	PU	536	N		’Αββαθα καὶ ’Αγγαθραββηλου τ Εἰαθου		Qbil.
C.4031	PU	544	N		ywlys ’wrlys ḥlpwn’ b ’‘ylmy zbyd’ ’qwp‘		bil.
RSP142	DC	545	Y/N	Y	tymrṣw b nbwz’ wšlmlt b nbwmr		
XI.1	PU	546	Y		yrḥbl’ wbrḥwm ’‘ylm w’qm’ ’t‘m		Q
C.4034	PU	550	Y		mzbn’ b yrḥy kyly rb’		Q
C.4040	PU	552	N		tymy b ‘bdy		
XII.45	Efqa	554	N		mlq ’sy’ gwy’ b mqymw b ‘qyb’	d+s+ss+7	slab
C.4041	PU	556	Y		nḥy ‘zyz ‘rby		
C.4042	PU	558	Y/N		sr’*		
H3.160	Efqa	562	N		n’ry b mqymw ṭyṭwylw +w!+s+bbk		Q
H7.96	Efqa	567	Y		lšmš b qrynw b ml’		Q
C.4047	PU	567	Y		mhryt lšmš		Q

InsNum	Prov	Date	Com	Scu	Dedicator	Benefic.	EP.
C.4049	PU	570	N		’spydn b [m]lkw b n[s’]		Q?
Can.36	Efqa	-	N		yrḥy b ydy[ ]		
DM.1	Efqa	-	Y		bl‘qb b ’bgl b nwrbl		
DM.3	Efqa	-	Y		mry’		
VI.4	DC	-	N		[ ] tym’ b[r p]ṭm’		
Ing84	Bel	-	N		?		slab?
Ing92	PU	-	N	Y	?		
Ing99	PU	-	N	Y	’qmt brt [ml’ b ’]lhbl*		Qbil.
C.4054	PU	-	N		’spdyn w’[ ] + bbk		
C.4055	PU	-	N		’d[ ]		Q?
C.4062	PU	-	Y		‘bydw ‘sty b gwr’ b nšm ’mṣr		dkrn
C.4067	PU	-	Y/N		mzb’ brt mzbn’*	f + b?	Q
C.4070	PU	-	Y		zby b zbd’ zbd		
C.4071	PU	-	N		ml’ b šd‘wn [ ]		
C.4073	PU	-	Y/N		sy‘wn’ b zbyd’		
C.4076	PU	-	N		gdy’ b[r ḥyrn b]gdn		
C.4080	PU	-	N		hdyr’ brt [ ] mrql’*		Q?
C.4082	PU	-	N		[’]l[hb]l b[r]		
C.4083	PU	-	Y/N		šlmt [bt] ’lh*		Q
C.4084	PU	-	N		dwr’ b zbdbwl mlk’ ’tndwr’ ’pwqḥ		Q
C.4085	PU	-	N		nšry wnyq’		Q
C.4086	Bel	-	Y		sbyns b yrḥbwl’ yrḥy		
C.4089	PU	-	Y	Y	šm‘wn b gdy’		
C.4091	PU	-	N		yrḥy b [ ]		εὐχή bil.
C.4096	PU	-	Y		zbwd		
C.4106	PU	-	N		?		dkrn
C.4107	PU	-	N		[ ] gd’ b [ ]		
XI.22	PU	-	Y?		mzbn’ b b‘ly		
XI.30	PU	-	N		yrḥbwl’ b ydy‘bl		
XI.38	PU	-	Y		šlmn b mry’		
XI.39	PU	-	N		mzbn’ b yrḥy b šm‘wn		
XI.40	PU	-	N		[‘g]ylw		
XI.42	PU	-	N		‘bnrgl br ḥry lšmš b ḥyrn gl’		

LIST 3

Incense-burners dedicated to divine recipients, who are identified by epithets usually reserved for the ‘Anonymous God’ and Baalshamin. The inscriptions include the formula *‘l ḥyy*.

InsNum	Prov	Date	C	S	Recipient	Dedicator	Benefic.	EP.
C.3981	PU	500	N	Y	r + ṭ + t + Agl + Mal	zbdbwl wmqymw b gd’ b mqymw rp’l	s + s + bk	
DM.2	Efqa	570	Y	Y	r	š‘dw b ṭ‘nw	d + ’nšwhy	
H7.98	Efqa	-	N		r	[ ]	d + w + s + da	Q

LIST 4

Incense-burners dedicated to divine recipients, who are identified by epithets usually reserved for the ‘Anonymous God’ and sometimes Baalshamin. The inscriptions do not include the formula *‘l ḥyy*.

InsNum	Prov	Date	C	S	Recipient	Dedicator	Benefic.	EP.
XI.11	Bel	524	Y		r+ṭ+s	‘gylw b tymrṣw b ḥm’		Q
C.4023	PU	538	N		ṭ	bršmš + s! + w!		
C.4025	PU	539	Y	Y	r	yrḥy wyd’ brh		
H3.164	Efqa	562	Y		r+ṭ	yrḥy b ‘gylw b skyy		Q
C.4051	PU	574	Y		r+ṭ+t	b‘ly + s + bbk		Q
C.4053	PU	579	Y		ṭ	zbd’ b ḥl’ w! + s		Q
DM.8	NW	-	Y		r+ṭ	‘bdbl		
C.4092	PU	-	Y		r+ṭ	n‘m b gdylt		Q
C.4093	PU	-	N	Y	r+ṭ	[ ] wnby‘t wzkrt		
C.4099	PU	-	N		r+ṭ	‘šy		Q
XI.26	PU	-	Y		r+ṭ	šgr’		Q
XI.37	PU	-	N		r	‘nnw		Q

LIST 5

Incense-burners dedicated to unknown deities, either because the text is badly damaged or, because their name is not presented by the dedicator(s). The employment of the formula is uncertain.

InsNum	Prov	Date	C	S	Recipient	Dedicator	Benefic.	EP.
XI.10	PU	516	N			?	‘l ḥyy mlkw b lšmš	
C.4094	PU	550	N			slwq’ b mqwl’ b tydwr’ b[ ]		
C.4037	PU	551	N			bwrp’ b ḥ[lpt]’ [ ]		
C.4052	PU	574	N			[d]yny b[ ]	‘l ḥyy d+b+u!+s	
XI.25	PU	-	N			ḥyrn b bryky b ḥyrn + bbk		
XI.35	PU	-	N			[ ] b tymlt		Q
XI.41	PU	-	Y	Y		‘gylw b mqym		
XI.44	Bel	-	N	Y		[ ] whrql’ b[ ] mrtyn brh		
XI.45	PU	-	N			?		
XI.48	Bel	-	N			yrḥy [ ] mlkw [ ]		
DM.5	Efqa	-	Y			bwn’ b ‘lyš’ b tym’		
RSP141	DC	-	N			?		
C.4090	PU	-	N			zbd[bw]l [br b]r‘th		εὐχή bil.

InsNum	Prov	Date	C	S	Recipient	Dedicator	Benefic.	EP.
C.4095	PU	-	N			?		
C.4097	Bel	-	Y			šlmn b ‘gylw		
C.4098	PU	-	N			ḥyr’ b zbyd’		
C.4100	PU	-	N			?		Q
C.4101	PU	-	Y?			‘b’ b kyly b ‘b’		
C.4102	DC	-	N			?		
C.4103	PU	-	Y?			’wṭk’		dkyr
C.4104	PU	-	N			[ ] tym’ [ ]		
C.4105	PU	-	N	Y		b‘ly wrḥmwhy klhwn		dkyr
St.M56	WW	-	N			mn ksp ‘nwšt’		

LIST 6

Incense-burners dedicated with a Greek or bilingual inscription. If bilingual, the Palmyrene part is badly damaged. With one exception, Sey317, the Greek equivalent of *‘l ḥyy* is not used.

InsNum	Prov	Date	C	S	Recipient	Dedicator	Benefic.	EP.
XII.33	GC	426	N		Θεῳ Eπ	gys ywlys mksyms		bil.
Sey317	Bel	546	Y		Δ Eπ	Ἰ.Αὐρ.Σαμεσιααβος	d + w + c	Eυ + E
Sey318	Bel	-	N		Δ Yπ Eπ			
Ing104	Efqa	-	N		Δ Yπ	Ἀθηνοδωρος τ Μοκιμου τ Μοκιμου τ Θαιμη τ Ἀμμαθα		
Ing105	Efqa	-	Y		Δ Yπ Eπ			
VI.8	DC	-	N		Δ Yπ Eπ	[ ] ὁ καὶ Ἰαρι[βωλης]		

LIST 7

Incense-burners dedicated to deities other than the ‘Anonymous God’ with an inscription including the formula *‘l ḥyy*.

InsNum	Prov	Date	C	S	Recipient	Dedicator	Benefic.	EP.
SyC.80	PU	348	N		[Agl] + Mal	mlkw [wz]bd‘[th] b tym‘md b bwrp’ zgwg	ds? + s + b + f!	
C.3986	PU	425	Y		Baal	nbwzbd wyrḥbwl’ b brnbw b nbwzbd b zbdl’ ’knby	ds + s + b	
C.3987	PU	443	Y		Baal	’gylw b mlkw b mqymw qšṭy	d + s	dkrn

InsNum	Prov	Date	C	S	Recipient	Dedicator	Benefic.	EP.
CaS135	Bel	470	Y		šlmt + GN	rp'l b bwlq' b nwrbl	d + s	dkrn
XII.44	Efqa	517	Y			tymw b lšmš b tymw b bwlḥ'	f + d + s	
XI.12	PU	525	N		[ ] + Mal	‘gylw b zbdbwl b [ ]	d + s + b	
XI.33	PU	-	Y		Agl + Mal	šm‘wn b yrḥy šm‘wn	s	
XI.79	PU	-	N		Agl + Mal	ymlkw b zbd'	? + s	
XII.41	Baal	-	N		'šr šbb[ ]	[ ] ml' b 'b'		
C.3990	Bel	-	N		mr' ‘lm'	ḥyrn b blḥzy b blḥ' mqy [’‘]by	d + s!	

LIST 8

Incense-burners dedicated to deities other than the ‘Anonymous God’. The formula *‘l ḥyy* is not employed in the inscription.

InsNum	Prov	Date	C	S	Recipient	Dedicator	Benefic.	EP.
C.3972	PU	366	Y		Shadrafa	‘tntn b zbd‘th tškb'		
CaS134	Bel	445	N		Astarte	ml' b dyny		
C.3976	PU	-	Y		g.‘.b.	bwln' b ‘zyzw b ‘zyzw b š'yl'		
IX.36	Bel	-	Y?			’Αλέξανδρος ἀρχιτέκτων θεοῦ Βήλου		
XI.43	Bel	-	N		Artemis?		Greek	

LIST 9

Incense-burners from the Palmyrena dedicated to various deities. The inscription features the formula *‘l ḥyy* or one of its Greek equivalents.

InsNum	Prov	Date	C	S	Recipient	Dedicator	Benefic.	EP.
C.3995	Pal	426	Y		AG	blyd‘ w‘tnwry wm‘nw b tym‘md b blyd‘	b	
IG2697	Naz	468	N		Θεῳ M N	’Αβλαιος καὶ ’Ιαραιος υἱοὶ Μόσχου	ds + c	
PNO.16	Pal	525	Y		AglMalAb	nbwzbd nḥy'	d	
PNO.15	Pal	564	Y		Ab	'bgl b [ ]wlb'	d	
SCa188	Pal	-	N		ΔΥπΕπ	yrḥbwl' b mlkw b ‘g'	d + c	

LIST 10

Incense-burners from the Palmyrena dedicated to various deities. The formula *ʿl ḥyy* or one of its Greek equivalents is not employed.

InsNum	Prov	Date	C	S	Recipient	Dedicator	Benefic.	EP.
C.3994	Pal	425	Y		AG = ΔΥπΕπ	mdynt'/πόλις		
PNO.72	Pal	-	N		AG	hrms b ydy		Q
C.4048	Dms	575	Y			yrḥy b nbwdʿ b mqy [w] qwšy brt slwq' wšbty brt whblt + bk*		Q

APPENDIX G

PALMYRENE HONORIFIC INSCRIPTIONS

Appendix G enumerates the chronological order of Palmyrene honorific inscriptions as far as possible. Usually they are attached to socles of statues, to consoles and to columns. The majority were found along the 'Great' and 'Transversal Colonnades' and in the *peristylia* of the temples of Bel and Baalshamin and the 'agora'. Whilst most of the statues are lost, their epigraphical reference still remains.

Many inscriptions are bilingual: Palmyrene-Greek. Generally, the Palmyrene text is preferred, except when it is badly damaged and the Greek counterpart is well preserved. Otherwise the script indicates that the text is only handed down in Greek.

The honorific inscriptions basically divide into two major categories. The first and larger group comprises those including the formula *lyqr* and/or one of its Greek equivalents (List A). In the second the formula *lyqr* and/or one of its Greek equivalents is absent, but these inscriptions are designated as 'honorific' on account of their archaeological and/or epigraphical context (List B). Certain phrases, e.g. *because he pleased them* (*in every respect*), *bdyl dy špr lhwn (bkl ṣbw)*, suggest a honorific character. However, there are two different categories of inscriptions that do not have the formula *lyqr*. The formula may be lacking either due to the state of preservation and in these instances an "N" in the column "Com" indicates that the inscription is incomplete, or because it simply was not used.

Unlike *ʿl ḥyy*-inscriptions, *lyqr*-inscriptions are distinctive, albeit in stereotyped phrases, for motivating the dedicator's act. However, they are only used for honouring human beings. As a rule deities are implicitly honoured since they act as recipients. Nevertheless, two inscriptions explicitly honour divinities. One originates from Khirbet Abu Duhur in the north-western Palmyrena. It reports the dedication of a relief *in honour of* a minor deity called Malka, *the Good and Rewarding for the life of* the dedicators *themselves* (*PNO*, no. 57). In general, inscriptions from the Palmyrena and peripheral areas often are distinguished by a lack of conventionality. CIS II: 3955, originating from the western parts of the city proper, expounds about building-activities *in honour of Shamahs and Allat and Rahim, the good gods.*[1]

SIGLA AND ABBREVIATIONS: KEY

Horizontal arrangement:

InsNum = number of the inscription
Prov = provenance of the inscription; the find-spot
Date = date of the inscription
Com = completeness of the inscription
B = bilingual inscription
Dedicator(s) = those who honour
Beneficiaries = the honoured

Perpendicular arrangement:

InsNum: C.3926 = CIS II, no. 3926 (numbers vary according to inscription)
III.24 = *Inv.*III, no. 24; Roman figure = Volume; Arabic figure = number of inscription
Sey321 = Seyrig (1939) + page number
Can.25 = Cantineau (1930) + page number
SCa186 = Cantineau (1933) + page number
Can350 = Cantineau (1936) + page number
SyC.75 = Cantineau (1938) + page number
Gaw100 = Gawlikowski (1973) + page number
RSP161 = *RSP* + number inscription
Ing106 = Ingholt (1936) + page number
IS279 = Ingholt (1932) + page number
Du.50 = *Dunant*, no. 50 (numbers vary according to inscription)
DFD37 = DFD + page number
Prov: Bel = found in or in the vicinity of the temple of Bel

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[1] According to 1.4 the honoured person's brother is called Lishamsh. Since CIS II: 3978 mentions Lishamsh and Zebaida as dedicators of a *ḥmn'* and an altar to *Shamash, the god of their father's house*, the person honoured here may be *Zebaida son of Malku son of Yedibel son of Nesha also known as Bar Abdibel who belongs to the Beni Migrat* (CIS II: 3978). The honouring agent may, as a consequence, be his tribe. Possibly, the dedication *for the life of the dedicators themselves and the life of their brothers and sons* (CIS II: 3978) contributed to the erection of the statue (CIS II: no. 3955). Simultaneously, this means that dedications were perceived to be executed *in honour* of the divine recipient whose status was enhanced in addition to that of the dedicator.

Baal = found in or in the vicinity of the temple of Baalshamin
Efqa = found in the vicinity of the Source Efqa
GC = found along the ‘Great Colonnade’
TC = found along the ‘Transversal Colonnade’
DC = found in the Camp of Diocletian
ago = found at or around the ‘agora’
PU = found in or in the vicinity of the city proper without indication of its original provenance: Provenance Unknown or Palmyra Unknown

Date: the date is given according to Seleucid Era

Com: Y = the inscription is complete
N = the inscription is not complete
Y/N = the inscription is not complete but can be plausibly restored

B: Y = the inscription is bilingual

Dedicator(s): B = Baalshamin
D = Durahlun

In both the columns “dedicator(s)” and “beneficiaries”:

b = br: son of
τ = τοῦ: son of
ʾ = Aurelius
y = Julius
l = Lucius
m = Marcus
s = Septimius
* = indicates that the person concerned is a woman
! = behind a symbol or word indicates that these persons are not only described in terms of kinship to one another, but are also referred to by their personal name

LIST A

Honorific inscriptions employing the Aramaic formula *lyqr* and/or its Greek equivalent τειμῆς χάριν or τειμῆς ἕνεκεν.

InsNum	Prov	Date	Com	B	Dedicator(s)	Beneficiaries
X.7	ago	320	N	Y	tgryʾ dy tdmwr	
IX.13	Bel	333	Y/N		bny kmrʾ wbny mtbwl	ḥšš b nšʾ b bwlḥʾ ḥšš

InsNum	Prov	Date	Com	B	Dedicator(s)	Beneficiaries
IX.11	Bel	336	Y	Y	tgry’ klhwn dy bmdynt bbl	mlkw b nš’ b bwlḥ’ dy mtqr’ ḥšš dy mn bny kmr’
C.3922	Bel	340	Y		bnwhy (of beneficiary)	‘gylw b tymy b zbdbwl dy mn bny kmr’
Du.37	Baal	343	Y		bny m‘zyn	zbdlh b bryky b nwrbl qynw dy mn bny m‘zyn
IX.1	Bel	357	Y		bnwhy (of beneficary)	lšmš b tybwl b škybl dy mn bny kmr’
Du.38	Baal	360	Y/N		kmry’ dy b‘lšmn	zb’ b tymn’ b whby b blḥzy
XII.35	GC	362	N		bny tymy	
C.3923	Bel	362	N	Y	gbl tdmry’ klhn	mqymw b ‘gylw b pṣy’l b tymy dy mtqrh ḥkyšw dy mn bny zbdbwl
IX.20	Bel	371	Y/N	Y	kmry’ dy bl	ḥyrn b bwn’ b rb’l b bwn’ b ‘tntn dy mtqr’ brš‘t dy mn bny myt’
Du.39	Baal	373	Y		bny m‘zyn	zbyd’ b ydy b mqymw gb’ dy mn bny m‘zyn
RSP159	DC	373	Y/N		’lt wbny nwrbl	zbdlh dy mtqrh sḥplh b šm‘wn b ’yš’ dy mn bny m‘zyn
II.1	DC	375	N	Y	’lt [wbny m‘zyn]	šlmlt b yrḥbwl’ b nwrbl dy mtqrh [b] ydy‘bl tdmry’ dy mn bny m‘zyn
SCa175	ago	385	Y	Y	bwl’ wdms	ḥyrn b bwn’ dy mtqr’ rb’l
X.39	ago	387	N	Y	bwl’	zbdlh b šmšgrm ’yš’
XI.81	PU	390	N		mqymw b mqymw b zbdbwl	mqymw ’bwhy w’[ḥwhy] (of dedicator)
X.40	ago	392	Y/N	Y	tgry’ tdmry’	zbdbwl b ‘gylw b ‘mt b ‘[ ]’ dy mn bny m‘zyn
X.131	ago	392	Y	Y	bny ‘grwd	mlkw b lšmš b ḥnbl b br‘th ’‘by
C.3969	Efqa	394	N		‘glbwl w[mlkbl] wbny kmr’	‘t’m b[rt] ’wšy ’tt bwlḥ’ [ ]*
Gaw69	Bel	395	Y	Y	bwl’	’bgr b pṭrqls dy mtqrh ‘stwrg’ b lqyšw dy mn bny myt’
X.127	ago	397	Y/N	Y	bwl’	yrḥy b zbdl’
Du.40	Baal	401	Y		B + D + bny m‘zyn	mlkw b ‘g’ b whby b blḥzy dy mn bny m‘zyn
Du.41	Baal	409	N	Y	B + D + bny m‘zyn	
Du.42	Baal	414	N			
Du.43	Baal	415	Y		bny m‘zyn	blḥzy b ‘g’ b whby bwlḥzy
X.129	ago	419	Y	Y	bwl’ wdmws	g’ys ywlys ḥyrn b ’lhbl
C.3917	Bel	420	Y	Y	bny gdybwl	’qyḥ b n‘ry b ’qyḥ
X.69	ago	423	Y/N	Y	bwl’	ḥggw b yrḥy b ‘g’ ydy‘bl
Du.25	Baal	426	Y/N	Y	bny! bwlm’ b ‘wydw b bwlm’ ’db	bny š‘d’ šbbyhwn (of dedicators)
C.3919	Bel	428	Y		bwl’	zbyd’ b š‘dw tymšmš
C.3921	Bel	432	Y/N	Y	bwl’ wdms	mlkw b whblt b m‘ny

InsNum	Prov	Date	Com	B	Dedicator(s)	Beneficiaries
X.54	ago	433	N	Y		mlkw b khylw qymw b nwrbl b khylw
RSP160	DC	434	N	Y	‘glbwl wmlkbl wbny kmr’	m‘ny b šlmlt b whblt b ‘[ ]’
C.3920	Bel	439	Y	Y	š‘dw	tym’ b lšmšy b ‘g’ ydy‘bl
IX.33	Bel	439	Y		bny ḥšš	ḥb’ b bgšw b zbdbwl
C.3955	TC	440	N		[bny zbdbwl] klhwn	
X.38	ago	442	N	Y	οἱ ἐν Σπασινου Χαρακος ἔνποροι	’Ιαραιον Νεβουζαβαδου τ Σαλαμαλλαθου τ ’Αχχαδανου ‘Αδριανον Παλμυρήνον
Du.45	Baal	443	N	Y	bny šyrt’	Σοαδον Βωλιαδος τ Σοαδου
X.81	ago	447	Y	Y	m.’lpys ’bgr b ḥyrn ’bgr wbny šyrt’	y.mksms
X.114	ago	449	N	Y	ἡ βουλὴ	’Ιαριβωλην Λισαμσο[υ τ] ’Ααβει
Du.46	Baal	449	Y		zbd’ b bryky b šm‘wn b bryky	yrḥy b ‘gylw b ḥyrn dwḥy
C.3930	Bel	450	Y	Y	bwl’ wdms	’‘ylmy b ḥyrn b mqymw b ḥyrn mt’ wḥyrn ’bwhy
C.3931	Bel	450	Y	Y	bwl’ wdms	bryky b ’mrš’ b yrḥbwl’ wmqymw brh
X.112	ago	451	N	Y	bny šyrt’/συνοδία	[τ ’Α]λεξανδ[ρου]
C.3927	Bel	451	Y	Y	bwl’	’ḥply b ḥyrn šb’ b ḥyrn bwn’ š‘t
X.99	ago	452	N	Y	οἱ υἱοὶ αὐτοῦ (of beneficiary)	Μάρκον Οὔλπιον ’Αβγαρον
C.3916	Bel	453	Y	Y	bny šyrt’	ns’ b ḥl’ b ns’ b ḥl’ b rp’l b ‘bsy
DFD162	Nabu	457	Y		bnwhy (of beneficiary)	mqymw b nbwzbd b bryky ‘bšy
VI.7	DC	461	N	Y	ḥgy b ‘g’ ḥgy w’ḥwhy	mlkw b š‘dy ‘ty
X.124	ago	461	Y	Y	bny šyrt’	nš’ b ḥl’ b nš’ ḥl’
C.3928	PU	466	N	Y	bny šyrt’	m.’lpys yrḥy b ḥyrn ’bgr
X.111	ago	467	Y		šyrt’	m.’lpys yrḥy b ḥyrn ’bgr
X.77	ago	468	N	Y	tym’ b tymrṣw lšmš grny	m.’lpys yrḥy b ḥyrn ’bgr
X.87	ago	468	Y		ḥyrn b yrḥy b tym’ ḥbyby b yrḥy b ḥyrn bny ’nwbt .. wtgry’	m.’lps yrḥy b ḥyrn ’bgr
X.88	ago	468	N		οἱ ἀναβάντες ἀπὸ ..	Μᾶρκον Οὔλπιον ’Ιαραῖον Αἰράνου τ ’Αβγαρου
X.90	ago	468	Y	Y	šyrt’	m.’lpys yrḥy b ḥyrn ’bgr
X.96	ago	468	N	Y	ἔμποροι οἱ ..	m.’lpys yrḥy b ḥyrn ’bgr
X.78	ago	469	N	Y	blšwr b yrḥy b tym’	m.’lpys yrḥy b ḥyrn ’bgr
X.107	ago	470	Y	Y	šyrt’	m.’lpys yrḥy b ḥyrn ’bgr
III.26	GC	470	Y		ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος	Ζεβειδαν Θαιμη τ Μοκιμου τ Γαρβα
SyC.75	Bel	470	Y		ḥdwdn b ḥdwdn prmwn	’lpys m.yrḥy b ḥyrn ’bgr

InsNum	Prov	Date	Com	B	Dedicator(s)	Beneficiaries
C.3956	TC	473	N		ḥlypy b ḥggw b mlkw	ḥlypy b ʾtpny b ḥlypy
X.24	ago	475	Y/N	Y	ʿlyšʾ ʾḥwhy (of benificiary)	ḥdwdn b ḥggw lšmš ʾzrzyrt
IX.22	Bel	479	Y			Ἰούλιος Ἰουλιανός
X.105	ago	480?	N	Y	ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος	mlkw b mqymw b ḥyrn b brʿty
Du.48	Baal	483	N	Y	the four tribes	
X.113	ago	485	Y	Y	glnws (prgmṣtʾ)	l.ʾnṭwnys qlsṭrṭs
C.3950	TC	490	Y	Y	bny zbdbwl klhwn	šrykw b ḥyrn b ʿlynʾ ṣprʾ
C.3951	TC	490	Y	Y	bny zbdbwl klhwn	ʿlynʾ b ḥyrn b ʿlynʾ ṣprʾ
C.3952	TC	490	Y	Y	bwlʾ	šrykw b ḥyrn b ʿlynʾ ṣprʾ
C.3953	TC	490	Y	Y	bny zbdbwl klhwn	šrykw b ḥyrn b ʿlynʾ ṣprʾ
C.3954	TC	490	Y	Y	šrykw	mrty brt ydʿ b whblt b šmʿwn*
Du.49	Baal	492	N		bny mʿzyn?	
Ing109	Bel	493	Y		οἱ ἀπὸ φυλῆς Χωνειτῶν	Θομαλλαχις ʿΑδδουδανου τ ʾΙαριβωλεους τ ʿΑδδουδανου τ Φιρμωνος*
X.4	ago	494	N		mqymw ʾbwhn (of beneficiaries)	yrḥy b mqymw b zbdʿth rpʾ [w ʾḥwhy]
C.3948	GC	504	Y/N	Y	bny šyrtʾ	tymrṣw b tymʾ b mqymw grbʾ and sons!
X.85	ago	504	N	Y		
DFD37	Bel	509	Y	Y	the four tribes	ʾlys bwrʾ b ṭyṭs ʾlys ʿgylw
X.44	ago	510	Y	Y	the four tribes	ʿgylw b mqy ʿgylw šwyrʾ
C.3949	GC	522	N	Y	tgrʾ	ydy b tymrṣw b tymʾ grbʾ
X.53	ago	522	Y		ymlkw b whblt gwrny	yrḥbwlʾ b mqymw b šrykw
X.119	ago	525	Y	Y	ḥgʾ brth dy tymʾ wʾḥth dy ḥlptʾ*	tymʾ b ḥlptʾ brʿth ʾlṭy wḥlptʾ brh
X.13	ago	529	N		bwlʾ wdms	tybwl b [ ] b [ ] b [ ]
III.5	GC	536	N		ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος	Πομπώνιον Δαρεῖον
IX.29	Bel	55	N		bwlʾ wdmws	[ ] brʿth b zbydʾ b [ ]
C.3932	GC	554	Y	Y	bwlʾ wdmws	y.ʾ. zbdlʾ b mlkw b mlkw nšwm
C.3933	GC	558	Y	Y	tgrʾ bny šyrtʾ	y.ʾ. zbydʾ b mqymw b zbydʾ ʿštwr
C.3944	GC	563	Y/N	Y	ʾ. plynws b mryʾ plynʾ rʿy	s.ḥyrn b ʾdynt
C.3934	GC	566	Y/N	Y	bwlʾ wdmws	y.ʾ. ʿgʾ dy mtqrʾ slwqws b ʿzyzw ʿzyzw šʾylʾ
C.3945	GC	569	Y/N	Y	tgmʾ dy qynyʾ	s. ʾdynt
C.3936	GC	569	Y	Y	bwlʾ wdms	y.ʾ. šlmlt b mlʾ ʿbdy
C.3937	GC	570	Y	Y	blʿqb b ḥršʾ	ʾ. wrwd
C.3935	GC	570	Y/N	Y	bwlʾ wdmws	slwqws ʿgʾ b ʿzyzw ʿzyzw b šʾylʾ
C.3938	GC	573	N	Y	bwlʾ wdmws	s. wrwd
C.3939	GC	574	Y/N	Y	y.ʾ. nbwzbd b šʿdw ḥyrʾ	s. wrwd
C.3940	GC	575	Y	Y	y.ʾ.s. ydʾ b ʾlksndrws ḥyrn srykw	s. wrwd

InsNum	Prov	Date	Com	B	Dedicator(s)	Beneficiaries
C.3941	GC	576	Y/N	Y	y.ʾ.s. mlkw b mlwkʾ nšwm	s. wrwd
C.3942	GC	577	N	Y	ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος	Σεπτίμιον Οὐορωδην
C.3943	GC	578	Y	Y	y.ʾ. šlmʾ b qsynʾ b mʿny	s. wrwd
X.98	ago	4[ ]	N		bwlʾ	
RSP162	DC	4[ ]	N		bny kmrʾ	yrḥbwlʾ b ʿwyd[ʾ b b] yrḥbwlʾ b ḥyrn mḥmmyʾ
Du.51	Baal	5[ ]	N		pršyʾ bʾbrʾ dy gmlʾ wʿnʾ	zbʾ b mqy b blḥzy [b b] mqyʾ
Du.47	Baal	N	Y			
IX.34	Bel		N		bny ḥšš	bgšw b ḥbʾ b bgšw
CaS132	Bel		Y?		bny tymrṣw kmry bʿltk ʾštrʾ	lšmš b ḥlypy b ʾtpny
IX.23	Bel		N		ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος	Γ. Οὐείβιον Κέλερα
IX.30	Bel		N	Y	ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος	Ἰούλιον Αὐρήλιον Νεβουμαιον Θαιμισαμσου τ Βωννεους Σαβεῖ
Gaw100	DC		N		[βουλὴ καὶ δῆμος]	
X.12	ago		N	Y		
X.16	ago		N	Y		[lt b] bny
X.57	ago		N	Y	bwlʾ	[ ] b tymrḥw b mlkw [ ]
X.63	ago		N	Y	bwlʾ	ʾlhbl b ʾlhbl b zbdbwl ʾhwd
X.79	ago		N		οἱ ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου αὐτοῦ οὐηξίλλου	Τ. Αἴλιον [ ]
X.109	ago		N		[βουλὴ καὶ δῆμος]	Μ. Ἀκείλιον Ἀθηνόδωρον Ἀκείλιου Μοκίμου
X.115	ago		N	Y	bwlʾ wdmws	y.ʾ. mlkw b wsḥw b mlkw b wsḥw nbwlʾ
X.128	ago		N	Y	m. ʾlpys yrḥy b ḥyrn ʾbgr	ṭbrys qlwdys py[ ]
X.130	ago		N	Y	bny! nšʾ ʿtʿqb	gʾys lqnys plwynws b bwrpʾ mlkw srgyʾ
X.17	ago		N	Y	ʾlhbl [b mlkw]	qlstqs (qṭrywnʾ)

LIST B

Inscriptions that do not employ the formula *lyqr* or one of its Greek equivalents, but the epigraphical and/or archaeological context of which indicates a honorific character.

InsNum	Prov	Date	Com	B	Dedicator(s)	Beneficiaries
XI.100	Bel	269	Y		kmryʾ dy bl	grymy b nbwzbd dy mn pḥd bny khnbw
Can268	Bel	307	Y		kmryʾ dy ḥrtʾ	ʿgylw b ʾydʿn dy mn bny kmrʾ

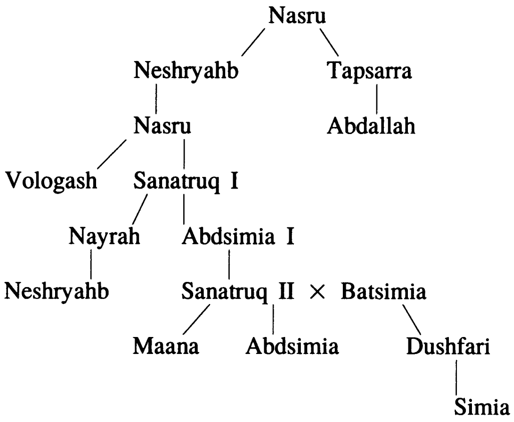
InsNum	Prov	Date	Com	B	Dedicator(s)	Beneficiaries
C.3925	Bel	328	Y/N	Y	ydy‘bl brh (of beneficiary)	‘zyzw b ydy‘bl brky dy mn bny mtbwl
C.3924	Bel	330	N	Y	tdmry’ wywny’ dy bslwky’	ydy‘bl b ‘zyzw b ydy‘bl dy mn bny mtbwl
IX.7	Bel	335	Y		‘gylw wydy bnwhy (of benefic.)	ydy b mlkw b ‘gylw b ‘bd‘stwr b ‘tz’ dy mn bny zbwd
IX.12	Bel	336	Y	Y	’nwš ‘nwšt’ wgbl tdmry’	mlkw b nš’ b bwlḥ’ ḥšš dy mn bny kmr’
Can.25	PU	382	N		tgry’ tdmry’ dy b’spsnqrṭ	zbdbwl b ’byhn b zbdbwl b lšmš b mkn’ rb’ dy mn pḥd bny mtbwl
X.62	ago	422	N			ml’ b tym[ ]
Du.44	Baal	442	N	Y	bwl’ wdmws	ml’ b yrḥy lšmš r‘y
VI.6	DC	447	N	Y	kmry ‘glbwl [ ]	[ ]qlys
Sey320	Bel	452	N		ἱερεῖς θεοῦ Βήλου	
X.29	ago	474	Y	Y	tgry’	m. ’mlyws mrqynws ’sqlpyd’ blwṭ b’nṭky’
C.3914	Bel	486	Y/N	Y	bwl’ wdms	yrḥbwl’ b ‘g’ w‘wyd’ b ḥdwdn bny yrḥbwl’ b ḥdwdn b zbdbwl b ḥdwdn prmwn
IX.26	Bel	504	N	Y	mlkw [b] mtqr’ mzbn’ b b[ ]	[ ] ’wṭqrṭwr qsr
Du.52	Baal	569	Y			Σεπτίμιον ’Οδαίναθον
XII.37	GC	569	N			Σεπτίμιον ’Οδαίναθον
C.3946	GC	582	Y		spṭmy’ zbd’ [ ]wzby	s. ’dynt
C.3947	GC	582	Y	Y	spṭmyw’ zbd’ [ ]wzby	spṭmy’ btzby*
X.47	ago	4[ ]	N	Y	bny šyrt’	tymrṣw b lšmš b mlkw ’‘by
C.3957	TC	5[ ]	N		br‘th b lšmš mlkw b [ ]	mlkw b mqymw b m‘yty b ḥlypy
III.23	GC		Y		Μάννος ὁ καὶ Μεζαββανας Θαιμη	Γ.Σηδάτιον Οὐελλήιον Πρεῖσκον Μακρεῖνον
III.18	GC		Y?		ἡ πόλις	Σεπτ. ’Αψαιον
C.3964	PU		N			m‘ny b mlkw b [ ]
C.3965	PU		N			‘zyzw b mlkw [ ]
Du.54	Baal		N?			zb’ b tymn’ whby
Du.50	Baal		N			[ ]Λουκίου Αὐρηλίου ‘Ηλιοδώρου τ [ ]
XI.88	Bel		N			mlkw b ‘gylw dy mtqrh b ’‘ry dy mn bny m‘zyn
XI.92	Bel		N			š’yl’ b nwrbl b ’qmt dy mn bny m‘zyn
Can350	Bel					whby b nwrbl b ’qmt dy mn bny m‘zyn
Ing96	PU		N		m‘ny ’ḥwh (of beneficiaries)	[ ] brt mqy ’mby* + hgr brt mqy ’mby*
IX.24	Bel		Y		Οὔλπιοι (sons! of beneficiary)	Μαρκος Οὔλπιος Μάλχος

InsNum	Prov	Date	Com	B	Dedicator(s)	Beneficiaries
IX.2	Bel		Y/N		Minucius T.f.Hor. Rufus	Drusus Tiberius Germanicus tym‘md b nš’ b [ ] dy mn bny šm‘d
C.3926	Bel		N	Y	k[mry]	mlkw b m[ ]
Ingl06	Bel		N			βαθ Μαλεχην [ ]ατρωναν
Sey321	Bel		N		[ἱερεῖς μεγίστ]ου θεοῦ Βήλου	
Sey321	Bel		N			[Καίσαρος Τ. Αἰ]λίου ‘Αδρια[νοῦ ’Αντων]είνου
RSP161	DC		N		‘gylw b mqymw b ‘gylw	[ ]’ b zbd’ ‘g[ylw]
X.1	ago		N		Μάλχος Μουκιανὸς καὶ ‘Ηλιὸδωρος οἱ Θεοδώρου Μοκίμου τ Αὐμάλου	[ ]ήιον Κάτλον
X.2	ago		Y	Y	Μάλχος Μουκιανὸς καὶ ‘Ηλιὸδωρος οἱ υἱοὶ (of beneficiary)	Θεόδωρον Μοκίμου τ Ζεβείδου Αὐμάλου τὸν πατέρα
X.27	ago		Y		‘Ηρηδης Σοραιχου	Μανείλιον Φοῦσκον Μανείλιου Φούσκου
X.28	ago		N		beneficiary?	παῖδα Φούσκου
X.34	ago		N		ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος	Φουλούιον Τιτιανὸν
X.55	ago		N		ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος	Μάλχον Βαρεα τ Μαλίχου τ Σημαναίου
X.59	ago		N		ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος	’Ιαριβωλην Μαλίχου Λισαμσου τ ’Ααβει
X.64	ago		N			Σεπτίμιον Σεουῆρον + Μάρκον Αὐρήλιον + ’Ιουλίαν Δόμνην*
X.67	ago		Y		ἡ πόλις	’Ιουλίαν Μαῖσαν ’Ιουλίας Σεβάστης ἀδελφήν*
X.89	ago		N		tgry’	m.’lpys yrḥy b ḥyrn ’bgr
X.108	ago		Y		M. Οὔλπιος Μάλχος	M. ’Ακείλιον ’Αθηνόδωρον ’Ακειλίου Μοκίμου
X.125	ago		Y?		Ζαβδιβωλος Ζαβδιβωλου τ Ζαβδααθους τ ’Ακκαβελου	Κλώδιον Κέλσον
Gaw89	PU		Y		mqymw b mqymw ‘rym’ wyrḥbwl’ b mlkw ’‘by	mqymw b mqymw ‘rym’ wbnwhy
SCa186	PU	N				[b] zbd‘th dy mn pḥd bny myt’
III.24	GC		Y?		Μαθθαβωλιον φυλή	T. Φλ. Κερεάλιον
Sey321	Bel		N			αὐτοκράτορος Καίσαρος Τ. Αἰλίου ‘Αδριανοῦ ’Αντωνείνου Σεβαστοῦ

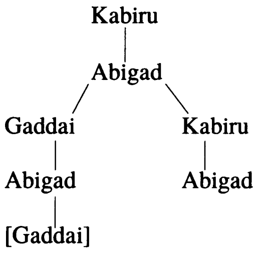
APPENDIX H

TWO TENTATIVE HATRENE FAMILY-TREES

I. A tentative family-tree of the Hatrene royal family.[1]


Nasru
Neshryahb
Tapsarra
Nasru
Abdallah
Vologash
Sanatruq I
Nayrah
Abdsimia I
Neshryahb
Sanatruq II × Batsimia
Maana
Abdsimia
Dushfari
Simia

II. A tentative family-tree of the dedicators of H107 and H245.


Kabiru
Abigad
Gaddai
Kabiru
Abigad
Abigad
[Gaddai]

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[1] Safar (1973: 98) presents a more complex and more complete family-tree in which he attempts to include all references to the lords of Hatra known to him. The result is a number of highly speculative family-relations. Ibrahim (1986: 315) is more cautious, but like Safar he considers Tapsarra to be a son of lord Nasru and not of the latter's grandfather Nasru, the father of lord Neshryahb. However, such a conception does account best for all the available data. Cf. Chapter 4.

APPENDIX I

LATIN AND GREEK INSCRIPTIONS FROM THE FERTILE CRESCENT EMPLOYING AN EQUIVALENT OF THE ARAMAIC FORMULA *ʿl ḥyy*

This appendix presents a survey of Latin and Greek inscriptions which employ an equivalent of Aramaic *ʿl ḥyy*. They were found throughout the Fertile Crescent, i.e. along the Syrian-Mesopotamian steppe. Sometimes a site yielded more than one or two inscriptions, but the majority have been incidental finds. Our main concern is to indicate the nature of the relationship between dedicators and beneficiaries. To this end there will be a special interest in the ways by which dedicators are qualified. The beneficiaries are either individuals related to the dedicator in terms of kinship or the Roman Emperor.

The following abbreviations are used:

status line:
Inscr = number of inscription or article and page number
Lan = language used in the inscription
Prov = provenance of the inscription
Date = (approximate) date of inscription according to our Era
Object = object of dedication
Div.R. = divine recipient
Benef = beneficiaries
Qualif.Ded. = qualification of dedicator

The first column designates the sigla of the inscription. To the list supplied in Appendices F and G, the following abbreviations may be added.

P+S = Parr and Starcky (1962)
S+B = Starcky and Bennett (1968)
Neg = Negev (1977)
Gat = Gatier (1985)
Dun = Dunand (1932)
Mout = Mouterde (1925)
Sey = Seyrig (1939)
Park = Parker and McDermott (1978)
Chaum = Chaumont (1979)
Bow = Bowersock (1975)

Can	=	Cantineau (1933)
Gaw	=	Gawlikowski (1973)
Naveh	=	Naveh (1974)

The second column designates the language: G = Greek, L = Latin and A = Aramaic.

The third, fourth and fifth column respectively supply the provenance, dates and type of object of the inscription; Baal = Baalbek.

The sixth column specifies deities. The following abbreviations are used: I = Jupiter, O = Optimus, M = Maximus, H = Heliopolitanus, pan = pantheon.

The seventh column indicates the category of beneficiaries.

The eighth column yields the epithets qualifying the dedicator; imp. = imperial.

Inscr	Lan	Prov	Date	Object	Div.R.	Benef	Qualif.Ded.
P+S:16	L	Petra	204	altar	Apollo	Emperor cs	imp. legate
P+S:16	L	Petra	204	altar		Emperor cs	imp. legate
S+B:45	L	Petra	204	altar		Emperor cs	imp. legate
S+B:46	L	Petra		altar	Pax	Emperor	
S+B:48	L	Petra		altar	Spes Temperantia	Emperor	
S+B:43	L	Petra		altar	Liber Pater	Emperor	
Neg:668	L	Gerasa	130	altar		Emperor	cavalry
SEG1537	G	Gerasa	184	slab	Emperor cs[1]		
Gat:308	G	Gerasa	207	altar	Artemis?	Emperor	association of fullers
Gat:310	G	Gerasa	200	altar	Artemis	Emperor cs	association of farmers?
IGLS9056	L	Bostra	225	altar		Emperor cs	
IGLS9057	G	Bostra	238	lintel		Emperor	*colonia*
IGLS9058	L	Bostra		slab		Emperor	
IGLS9059	G	Bostra				Emperor	
IGLS9048	LG	Bostra	150	slab		Emperor	
IGLS9049	G	Bostra	170	lintel		Emperor	
IGLS2711	L	Baal	190	column	Mercury Venus IOM	Emperor cs	*speculator legionis*
IGLS2712	L	Baal	190	column	*idem*	Emperor cs	*idem*
IGLS2713	L	Baal	190	column	*idem*	Emperor cs	freedman
IGLS2714	L	Baal	130		IOMH	Emperor	legacy
IGLS2715	L	Baal	190	socle	IOMH	a. Emperor b. kin	
IGLS2716	L	Baal	238	socle	IOMH	Emperor	*decurio*
IGLS2717	L	Baal		socle	IOMH	Emperor	*mutatores*

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[1] *SEG*, vol. 32, 1982, no. 1537.

Inscr	Lan	Prov	Date	Object	Div.R.	Benef	Qualif.Ded.
IGLS2719	L	Baal		altar	IOMH	a. patron cs b. kin	
IGLS2720	L	Baal		socle	IOMH	kin	
IGLS2723	L	Baal		socle	IOMH	Emperor	*plumbarius*
IGLS2727	G	Baal	130	socle	ZeusH	Emperor	
IGLS2743	L	Baal		socle		kin	*decurio*
IGLS2744	G	Baal	211	socle		Emperor cs	veteran cs
IGLS2745	L	Baal		socle		Emperor	legacy
IGLS2745b	G	Baal		column		Emperor	
IGLS2748	L	Baal		slab		kin	
IGLS2751	L	Baal		socle		kin	
IGLS2752	L	Baal				kin	
IGLS2755	L	Baal		socle		kin	
IGLS2756	L	Baal		slab			
IGLS2799	L	Baal		slab		Emperor	
IGLS2800	L	Baal		slab		Emperor	
IGLS2902	G	Baal		socle		kin	
IGLS1346	G	Apamea	170	slab		Emperor	city-council
IGLS2904	L	Hermel		altar		kin	
SEG1530	G	Radra		altar	Azizos	Emperor cs[2]	
IGLS2905	G	Harbata		statue		kin	
IGLS2908	L	el-Ahmar		socle	[Ha]darenus	kin	
IGLS2910	G	Btedel		altar	H	dedicator + ?	
IGLS2921	L	Hadeth		altar	Apollo	pupil	*nutricius*
IGLS2931	G	Niha		socle		kin	
IGLS2932	G	Niha		socle		kin	
IGLS2939	G	Niha		altar		house + kin	
IGLS86	G	Maras		stele	ἐπηκόῳ	dedicator + ?	στρατηγός
Dun574	G	Tarba				kin	
Mout228	G	Tafas		lintel		Emperor	πατὴρ πόλεως
SEG1383	G	Abila	187	altar	Zeus + Apis	Emperor[3]	
IGLS2709	G	Yabroud		altar		patron?	
IGLS2104	G	Durbah	116	stele		patrons?	
IGLS2952	L	D.Labas		altar	IOMH	patrons?	
IGLS2980	G	Angarr		column		kings	
IGLS4027	G	Sahin	260	altar	ὑψίστῳ		
IGLS4049	G	Hebbé		altar	three names		
Dun401	G	Shaqqa			Bel?	Emperor	
IGLS2115	L	Mariamme		slab		Emperor cs	*speculatores*
IGLS2938	L	Niha		column		Emperor	
IGLS2950	L	Ferzol		lintel		Emperor	
IGLS2964	L	Gdita	170	socle	Juno	Emperor cs	legacy
IGLS2966	L	Gdita	170	slab		Emperor cs	dedicator cs
IGLS2976	L	Masi		altar	Saturn	Emperor	

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[2] *SEG*, vol. 37, 1987, no. 1530.

[3] *SEG*, vol. 31, 1981, no. 1383.

Inscr	Lan	Prov	Date	Object	Div.R.	Benef	Qualif.Ded.
Sey303	G	Hierapolis	130	socle	Apollo	Emperor cs	
Park61	L	Uweinid	210	slab		Emperor cs	

Greek and Latin inscriptions referred to or discussed in chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5: Bower514 in chapter 2; Chaum235 and Naveh216 in chapter 4. The rest originates either from Dura-Europos, discussed in chapter 5, or from Palmyra and the Palmyrena, discussed in chapter 3.

Inscr	Lan	Prov	Date	Object	Div. R.	Benef	Qualif.Ded.
Bower514	GA	Ruwwafa	167	lintel		Emperor	imp.legate
Chaum235	L	Hatra	235	statue	Hercules	Emperor	mil.tribune
ED.I42	L	Dura	190	altar	GadDura	Emperor	*decuriones*
ED.V226	L	Dura	195	shrine	IOM + pan	Emperor cs	*actuarius*
ED.VII85	L	Dura	210	shrine	Mithras	Emperor cs	chief centurion
ED.IX107	L	Dura	210	altar	IOMD	centurion	freedman
C2.3971	GA	Palmyra	270	socle		local rulers	
C2.4003	GA	Palmyra	173	slab	ἐπηκόῳ	kin	
Inv.VI.5	GA	Palmyra	133	altar	idem	kin	
Sey317	G	Palmyra	235	socle	idem	kin	
Gaw92	GA	Palmyra	150	socle	idem	kin	
Can188	GA	alQdeym	150	altar	idem	kin	
C2.3912	GA	Tayibeh	134	slab	Κεραυνίῳ	Emperor	
IGLS2697	G	Nazala	157	altar		kin	
IGLS2220	G	Emesa		relief	6 gods	kin	
IGLS2223	G	Emesa		socle		patrons?/kin?	
IGLS2502	G	Qatna		socle		kin	
IGLS2560	G	Zaidal		stele		Emperor cs	
Naveh216	GA	Dura		slab	Helios	dedicator	
ED.III50	G	Dura		slab		kin	
ED.VII320	G	Dura		shrine	Bel	kin	
ED.III65	G	Dura	119	shrine	Artemis?		
ED.VII169	G	Dura	175	altar?	Adonis	kin	
IFD140	G	Dura	169	vault	Zeus Megistos	kin	ruler city
ED.V142	G	Dura	162	shrine	Artemis	kin	
ED.VII168	G	Dura	153	shrine	Adonis?	kin	association
ED.VII168	G	Dura	152	lintel	Atargatis	kin	
ED.III61	G	Dura	93	shrine	idem	kin	
ED.VII129	G	Dura	86	shrine		kin	
ED.V114	G	Dura	54	shrine	Aphlad	a. ruler city b. kin	association
ED.V112	G	Dura	54	relief	Aphlad	kin	
ED.II92	G	Dura	52	slab	Zeus Soter	ruler city	

Inscr	Lan	Prov	Date	Object	Div. R.	Benef	Qualif.Ded.
ED.V177	G	Dura	34	statue		kin	
IFD129	G	Dura	34	φαλλοί	Atargatis?	kin	
Cum427	G	Dura	32	altar?	*idem*	kin	
ED.III63	G	Dura	3	slab	Artemis Apollo	kin	

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